DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 264 156 SO 016 894

AUTHOR Massiah, Joycelin, Ed.
TITLE Women and the Family. Women in the Caribbean Project, Volume 2.
INSTITUTION University of the West Indies, Cave Hill (Barbados). Inst. of Social and Economic Research.
PUB DATE 82
NOTE 182p.; For related volumes, see SO 016 895-898.
AVAILABLE FROM Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, P.O. Box 64, Bridgetown, Barbados.
PUB TYPE Collected Works - General (020) -- Reports - Descriptive (141) -- Information Analyses (070)

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS Child Rearing; Emotional Problems; *Family (Sociological Unit); Family Characteristics; Family Environment; *Family Life; *Females; Foreign Countries; Friendship; Heads of Households; Interpersonal Relationship; Mental Health; Models; Responsibility; *Sex Role; Social Networks; Stress Variables
IDENTIFIERS *Caribbean

ABSTRACT

One in a series of documents emanating from a three-year project concerned with the role of women in the English-speaking Caribbean, this collection of papers examines family life and the domestic domain. The overall objectives of the project are to establish in the region a data base for teaching, research, and planning purposes and to develop guidelines for a cohesive social policy that recognizes women's needs and draws on their skills and talents for program planning and execution. Following an introduction, "Women and the Family in Caribbean Society" (Hermione McKenzie), the first paper, "The Realm of Female Familial Responsibility" (Victoria Durant-Gonzales), focuses on role ideals and role behavior of Caribbean women. The second paper, "Stresses Affecting Women and Their Families" (Jean Jackson), contains case studies exploring emotional transactions between Caribbean women and their families. The third paper, "Women Who Head Households" (Joycelin Massiah), examines census and other information on household headship. The concluding paper, "Network Analysis: A Suggested Model for the Study of Women and the Family in the Caribbean" (Dorian Powell), outlines an analysis of women's networks of relationships. (RM)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED264156

Women and the Family

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☒ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official NIE position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Joycelin Massiah

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SP 016 894

The Women in the Caribbean Project logo incorporates The Message by Edna Manley (Ciment fondu, 1977, Collection: Commonwealth Secretariat, London) and is used with permission.

The cover incorporates Mother and Child by Wendy Donawa (Lithograph, Collection: the Artist).

Logo and cover design by Camille Parchment.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Women in the Caribbean Project
Volume 2
General Editor: Joycelin Massiah

WOMEN AND THE FAMILY

Institute of Social and Economic Research
(Eastern Caribbean)
University of the West Indies
Cave Hill, Barbados
1982

Copyright © 1982
Institute of Social and Economic Research

WOMEN IN THE CARIBBEAN PROJECT

RESEARCH PAPERS - PHASE I

VOLUME 1 - WOMEN AND THE LAW

Norma Forde - Women and the Law in the Commonwealth Caribbean

VOLUME 2 - WOMEN AND THE FAMILY

Victoria Durant-Gonzalez - The Realm of Female Familial Responsibility

Jean Jackson - Stresses Affecting Women and their Families

Joycelin Massiah - Women who Head Households

Dorian Powell - Network Analysis: A Suggested Model for the Study of Women and the Family in the Caribbean

(Introduction by *Hermione McKenzie*)

VOLUME 3 - WOMEN AND POLITICS

K. O'Brien and *Neville Duncan* - Women and Politics in Barbados

VOLUME 4 - PERCEPTIONS OF CARIBBEAN WOMEN

Erna Brodber - Towards a Documentation of Stereotypes

(Foreword by *Merle Hodge*)

VOLUME 5 - WOMEN AND EDUCATION

Joyce Cole - Official Ideology and the Education of Women in the English-speaking Caribbean, 1835-1950

Patricia Mohammed - Educational Attainment of Women in Trinidad and Tobago, 1946-1980

(Introduction by *Kathleen Drayton*)

VOLUME 6 - WOMEN, WORK AND DEVELOPMENT

Margaret Gill - Women, Work and Development in Barbados, 1946-1970

Joycelin Massiah - Indicators of Women in Development: A Preliminary Framework for the Caribbean

Stella Odie-Ali - Women in Agriculture in Guyana

Christine Roberts - Some Economic Issues Pertaining to Women and Employment in the Caribbean

(Introduction by *Patricia Anderson*)

VOLUME 7 - FACTS AND FIGURES ABOUT WOMEN IN THE CARIBBEAN

Christine Roberts (compiler)

FOREWORD

WOMEN IN THE CARIBBEAN PROJECT

This volume is one of a series emanating from Phase I of a three-year project concerned with the Role of Women in the English-speaking Caribbean. The project involves a multi-disciplinary team of Caribbean scholars of both sexes covering the fields of Anthropology, Caribbean Literature, Demography, Sociology and Political Science drawn from the three campuses of the UWI and from the University of Guyana.

The principal objectives of the study are to establish in the region a data base for teaching, research and planning purposes and to develop guidelines for a cohesive social policy which recognizes the needs of women and draws on their skills and talents for programme planning and execution. In addition, the project is seen as a means of contributing to the general body of knowledge on the position of women in social life. Specifically, a major contribution anticipated from the project is an extension of the boundaries of the notion of development and development planning during a period of rapid social and economic change within the Caribbean region.

The study was designed in two phases. The first covered the entire region and focused on the collection and review of available documentary material as well as the conduct of a small pilot study designed to test the instruments for use in a larger field study, styled Phase II. This latter phase consisted of detailed interviews of samples of women in Barbados, Antigua, St. Vincent and Guyana. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection techniques were employed. The objective was to develop an analytic approach which would permit the linkage between basic and applied research which the research team feels is necessary for the development of relevant policy programmes for women.

The Institute wishes to record its appreciation for the assistance provided by the following persons and agencies:

The Leverhulme Trust Fund which financed Phase I of the project;

the Carnegie Foundation which financed the publication of the series of papers from Phase I of the project;

the persons, who must remain anonymous, whose invaluable comments helped to improve the quality of the papers;

the guest writers who agreed to prepare Introductions to each of the volumes in the series; and

Olive Senior who, at short notice agreed to edit the series.

JOYCELIN MASSIAH
DEPUTY DIRECTOR
INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RESEARCH.

WOMEN AND THE FAMILY

CONTENTS

	Page
HERMIONE MCKENZIE - INTRODUCTION: WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN CARIBBEAN SOCIETY	vii
VICTORIA DURANT-GONZALEZ - THE REALM OF FEMALE FAMILIAL RESPONSIBILITY	1
JEAN JACKSON - STRESSES AFFECTING WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES	28
JOYCELIN MASSIAH - WOMEN WHO HEAD HOUSEHOLDS	62
DORIAN POWELL - NETWORK ANALYSIS: A SUGGESTED MODEL FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN THE CARIBBEAN	131

HERMIONE MCKENZIE

INTRODUCTION: WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN CARIBBEAN SOCIETY

An important initial aim of the Women in the Caribbean Project has been to examine and define our existing knowledge on Caribbean Women. The present collection of papers undertakes some of this foundation work towards a definitive study of women in Caribbean society, looking at family life and the domestic domain as spheres of particular importance and relevance to female status.

How shall we study women in the Caribbean family? Some critical issues related to this work are first, questions about the variety of possible approaches to the study of women in the Caribbean family setting, the usefulness of different approaches, and their complementarity; second, questions about what substantive knowledge emerges on the role of women in the family, and our analysis and conclusions based on that knowledge.

The four papers presented reflect apparently diverse approaches to the study of women in the Caribbean family. In alphabetical order, first Victoria Durant-Gonzalez, using anthropological field studies as well as survey data, focuses on role ideals and role behaviour of Caribbean women, centring around the family as a realm of female responsibility. Next, Jean Jackson, with case studies, explores some of the emotional transactions between women and their families. Joycelin Massiah examines census and other information on household headship; and lastly, Dorian Powell outlines an analysis of women's networks of relationships.

The approaches appear diverse, but the work of each writer overlaps, intersects with, and gives accent and emphasis to that of the others. Massiah's study of the high incidence of 'female headed' households in the English-speaking Caribbean region finds a useful complement in Durant-Gonzalez' analysis of the dominant female role of "producing, providing, controlling, or managing those resources essential to meeting daily needs". Durant-Gonzalez sees this role as an important source of identity and purpose for women in the Caribbean, summarized in the phrase "Women have to make do". This phrase typifies a situation in which many women find themselves in charge of providing and managing for self and others in spite of conditions of limited resources. And one of the ways in which it is observed that women 'make do' is through extended family linkages and other 'network' alliances, which integrates Dorian Powell's proposed work on female networks.

Jean Jackson's study of women and their family problems gives us a more rare, in-depth view, one that is also mirrored to a certain extent in Massiah's case studies. Sexual involvements are one way of 'making do': "I got involved through I was not working ... I did not know that I would get pregnant" says one young woman in Jackson's study. But at the same time there are many difficulties in obtaining continuous support for children and the household from putative fathers. Another source of difficulty is the frustration and insecurity of the women's emotional relationships with their men, and women report that they believe it necessary to be constantly prepared for "if a husband skips home". Durant-Gonzalez considers, among other things, the impact of recent status of children legislation in the Caribbean which - in her view - accentuates the emotional and economic insecurity of wives and also consolidates 'male-sharing' patterns in the society.

A key interpretative approach here is the concept of different domains of social life, as outlined by Naomi Quinn: "Female status may be very low in some domains of behaviour, approach equality with men's status in others, and even, in some domains, surpass the status of men". As stated above, women exercise a great deal of initiative and strength in 'making do'. Child-bearing and child-rearing are also identified as important instrumental areas for the female role. It is in these activities that women find the greatest opportunities to exercise independence, responsibility, decision-making autonomy, and control over self and others. In the above domains they may be said to surpass men in status. But child-bearing requires at least a *genitor* (if not necessarily a *pater*) and women also actively seek the economic and emotional support of men for themselves and their offspring. It is in these domains of sexual and emotional involvement with men, the fathers of their children and their (sometimes) breadwinners, that women appear to be weakest. One response to their disadvantaged position may be seen in the female emphasis on and desire for economic independence and perhaps emotional independence as well, especially in the mature years. But this is not necessarily an adequate solution.

There is also a little noticed but highly problematic corollary: how do children, male and female respectively, cope with the ambivalent model of a dominant and managing mother who at the same time experiences such insecurity and oppression from her male partner(s)? Jean Jackson's case study of Miss M, 25 years old, treats the difficulties

of this woman with her eldest son's behaviour as the presenting problem, but focuses mainly on Miss M's complex relationships with two other men who have fathered her other five children. But look again. What is happening to this eldest son, 11-year-old Bobby, born when his mother was 14 years old, who is actively antagonizing his step-father and who comments freely and cynically on his mother's relationships with her men? To what extent do his mother's evident status weaknesses set the stage for his own later patterns of behaviour?

Look yet again. Children, as Durant-Gonzalez points out, are the instruments of their mother's strength - her bargaining weapons for support from males, her key opportunities for responsibility, decision-making autonomy, and control over others, her sometime links with her support networks, and her major objects of care and concern. We are now beginning to study what these responsibilities do for the woman. But what does the experience do for the children, and for the later roles that they will play as men and women?

There is no immediate answer to the above questions, but it is encouraging to know that the Women in the Caribbean Project emphasizes socialization as an important area of its ongoing research on the status of women.

There are many other areas of this work which raise similar unanswered questions, and these present fruitful areas for future research. This is a vital role for a collection of papers such as this, and it illustrates their purpose as outlines of the arena of study rather than final conclusions. But there are also questions of the conceptualization of the field of study which call for discussion and emphasis, and I propose to review here some of the challenges and problems which need to be tackled in the search for appropriate frameworks through which to study women in the Caribbean family. The issues to which I will give particular attention here are Powell's proposed study of networks and Massiah's study of female household headship.

Household Families and the Importance of 'networks'

In 1975, in a joint paper with Dorian Powell [5] I briefly explored the relevance and usefulness of looking at female networks as an aspect of the family situation of women. At that time, I drew attention to women's kinship relations as an important backdrop against which their

mating behaviour took place. This was not a new observation. As long ago as 1953 Fernando Henriques had approached the Jamaican family in terms of both a 'conjugal' and a 'consanguineous' basis and had pointed to the combinations of both factors existing in the types of domestic groups which he studied. In particular, Henriques noted that while a 'conjugal' nuclear domestic group was broadly the norm, there were many variations which produced kinship-based household groups rather than groups based on a mating relationship. Aspects of this observation, and particularly of the households based on maternal kinship ties, have of course been widely developed since in the work of R.T. Smith and later writers on matrifocality [See, e.g. Smith 9, 11, Gonzalez 2, Safa 8].

An even more relevant aspect of Henriquez' observation, however, which has also emerged in the work of R.T. Smith and other writers, has been the observed reliance on kin outside as well as within the household groups. The importance of this observation has been the implication of the existence of a possible general principle of kinship which is operative in family formation and which might function as an antidote to unpredictable or uncontrollable mating situations. My own conclusion in 1975, however, based largely on the analysis of Jamaican census data, was that most women aged between 25 and 45 had 'conjugal' family forms (over 70 per cent of such women) and that the kinship principle, if it existed, operated largely to provide a transitional family phase for younger (under age 25) women. Further, the kinship network was used more as a 'safety net' than functioning as an active factor in the formation of households.

The detailed analysis of this factor, which Powell proposes to undertake, is therefore highly desirable. The outstanding relevance of this web or network to women and their families is its appearance of being mainly female-oriented and female-operated; and its use by women to cope with their family instabilities, if this can be documented, will help us to understand what is the dynamic role of the network in relation to the formation or persistence of families and households.

In addition, Powell's preliminary review of the literature, as well as other basic research such as that of Davenport in Jamaica, indicates that there are also male networks. Powell gives examples of co-operative labour and housebuilding. This could lead to even wider studies of network principles in Caribbean communities.

In my own work [3] I have also used the concept of a 'family network' to differentiate the family group (as distinct from 'kin') from the household group and this is an issue which bears particular relevance to the analysis of women as household heads. As Massiah points out early in her study, there is an important distinction between *household* and *family* which may tend to be obscured in some current literature.

The key point is that 'family' members in the Caribbean do not necessarily all reside in the household.[1] From preliminary research in Jamaica, I have identified certain family members who are often permanently non-resident: the most important is the non-resident father; but non-resident siblings are often mentioned, and half-siblings (step-siblings) who are 'outside' the domestic group are also sometimes included. The converse is also true: some residents in a domestic group may not be included as members of the family. And there is yet another dimension: by virtue of residence in the domestic group, some categories of kin are included in the concept of the family while if they lived outside the domestic group they would not be so recognized. As Sidney Greenfield [1] argued in 1961, in relation to the family, in Barbados, "Households are groupings of individuals who inhabit the same dwelling, while families are institutionally defined systems around specific tasks ... the household is a unit of observation while the family is an analytic construction".

The above discussion is in no way a suggestion that we should not study households. It is evident that domestic group formation and processes as discussed by Massiah and Durant-Gonzalez, are of the utmost importance in our understanding of the female role. What I have suggested is the additional concept of a 'family network' which does not necessarily coincide with the boundaries of the domestic group but which impinges on it and on the roles of women in multiple ways.

Elsewhere, I have commented that most analysts insist on championing either the 'household' approach or the 'family network' approach without recognizing that both factors are at work and that what we need to study is the complementarity and interplay between the two. The above comments still remain as a particular challenge to the study of women in the family, for it appears that women above all others have a dual investment in the household as a domain and in the network as a necessary resource for survival.

The importance of women's domestic life leads us to analyse the female role in *households*. But as stated above, we also need to understand how this is related to women in *families*. While the present volume directs our attention both to households and networks, we need to know much more about cultural family forms and how they relate to the household. Massiah's work offers a particular challenge here, for it reveals how wide is the gap which presently exists between census information and in-depth social research on the status of women. As she points out, the identification of women as household heads is itself an unresolved problem. An average of 47 per cent of female heads of household reported themselves to be living with a male partner. To what extent do women appear as household heads because the male partner was simply not present at the census interview? Or, alternatively, is this an accurate indicator of male marginality? On the other hand, to what extent may even more women who were truly heads of households have been omitted simply because a male partner was resident in the household?

It is important for us to understand in more depth both the cultural biases in reporting household headship and the varieties of male/female arrangements within the household. The literature on household headship indicates that there are many factors which lead to a biased reporting of males as heads of household, and also that there are factors which can lead to biased reporting of females as heads of household. As one small example of the latter, there is the tendency in some Caribbean societies for male respondents to deliberately assume marginality in housekeeping responsibilities by saying: "Since the wife is in charge of housekeeping, list her as head of household!" While many studies on headship express the hope that these biases may somehow cancel out each other, it seems more desirable that these biases should be systematically examined so as to help clarify future research findings. It is also noteworthy that 58 per cent of household heads in Massiah's study were reported to be 'not in the labour force', which raises further questions about the interplay between household headship and whatever arrangements exist for domestic support.

Again, in view of the high median age of female heads of household in the Caribbean, more detailed analyses by age and a more detailed analysis of household composition, especially of child dependency, are needed. It hardly appears possible to derive much of this analysis from existing census material, so this leads us to further

exploration of other research possibilities. Many years ago, Edith Clarke described the condition of single women with young children as 'parlous in the extreme' and these are the age groups which need the most intensive enquiry. Massiah's analysis of women on public assistance - 'the poorest of the poor' - and Jackson's case studies both give some insight into the problems of child-care and child-rearing, and point the way towards the need for wider and more intensive studies of these aspects.

Massiah's paper also leads us to an important administrative issue, the need for relevant tabulations of census materials in relation to research on women. The 1980 Commonwealth Caribbean census returns are currently being processed, so this is an appropriate time to point out some of the discrepancies in specific areas.

Varying ethnic groups in the Caribbean have widely different family patterns, but there is no available tabulation of household headship or union status by race/ethnicity, which would provide the most widely comparable indicators of mating patterns and domestic groupings. Again, the tabulation of female union status by relationship to household head, which was last undertaken in 1960, would give a valuable insight into the linkages between unions and households. At present, household headship can be analysed by union status, but not the relationship of females to the household head. This is of particular interest if females in visiting unions are living in kinship-based households. The most valuable tabulation would be female union status by motherhood (since this is an important way of identifying visiting unions) and by relationship to household head. The 1970 tabulation of women by union status also includes only women under age 65, so it is difficult to get a comprehensive picture of how many older women are still in unions. In any case, women over 45 are included on the basis of their union status *as at age 45*, which makes it impossible to evaluate changes in the union status of older women. Finally, Massiah also points out that important tabulations such as household headship by sex, union status and economic activity are not available. These requirements need to be pursued further with those who plan the census tabulations.

Conclusion: Women as Rulers in the Realm of Tribulation

The domain of the Caribbean woman lies in 'making do'. That irrepressible black American writer Zora Neale Hurston, commented many years ago on a visit to Jamaica:

> It is assumed that God made poor black females for beasts of burden ... God made two kinds of donkeys, one kind that can talk [Hurston 3].

This judgement is interestingly mirrored in Durant-Gonzales' quotation from a Trinidadian respondent: "Woman is a donkey. She works at work, then come home and works again". Is she merely being a masochist? Rather, she appears to accept this responsibility as part of her self-image, as her major source of self-identity as well as her socially defined role ...

The substantially lower levels of education among female heads of household, reported in Massiah's paper as compared with male heads, are worthy of note. The education differentials between male and female heads of households are in general much greater than the differentials between the overall educational levels of males and females in the Caribbean societies studied. Why do female heads of household show lower levels of education? One might hypothesize a class factor: women in the lower income groups, who have lower levels of education, might be also more likely to display a pattern of household headship. Or one might hypothesize a selective factor: women of lower education might be more often forced into personal and social situations which result in their assuming household headship. Durant-Gonzalez suggests that early child-bearing truncates female educational opportunities, and it is possible that such child-bearing females predominantly become household heads. Again, since many older women are household heads, they may be simply displaying the lower educational levels of an older generation, as compared with the overall population. Whatever the explanation - and this issue is obviously yet another area for further research - the overt situation is that many women of low education are tackling the onerous tasks of household headship and draw their status largely from activities in those areas. It is a realm of contradictions, at once dominant and vulnerable. There is much opportunity for autonomy and independence, and yet conditions are often precarious, with financial difficulties and with heavy dependence on male partners, kinship and friendship networks, and on government social services for aid.

INTRODUCTION

It is clear from the above that the present collection of papers is not so much an end as a beginning. The most important functions of these papers are to bring out the many existing complexities and contradictions in the lives of Caribbean women, and to lead us toward the goal of more detailed analysis and understanding.

FOOTNOTE

[1]The debate over 'households' and 'families' has continued for many years. Some key contributors have been: Smith [10], Murra [7], Solien [12], Greenfield [1], Mintz and Davenport [6].

REFERENCES

[1] GREENFIELD, S., "Socio-economic factors and family form", *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 1, March 1961.

[2] GONZALEZ, Nancie L. and SZWED, J.F. (eds.), "Toward a Definition of Matrifocality", in Whitten, N.E., *Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives*, New York: Free Press, 1970.

[3] HURSTON, Zora Neale, *Tell My Horse*, Philadelphia: J.R. Lippincott Co., 1938.

[4] MCKENZIE, Hermione C., "The Individual, the Family and Society in the Caribbean", Second Commonwealth Social Studies Conference, Kingston, Jamaica, 1979, mimeo.

[5] _____ and POWELL, Dorian, "The Status of Women in the Jamaican Family Structure", Background paper prepared for the Jamaica Delegation to the IWY Conference, Mexico, 1975. Department of Sociology, UWI, mimeo.

[6] MINTZ, S. and DAVENPORT, W., "Caribbean Social Organisation", *Social and Economic Studies*, Volume 10, No. 4, December 1961.

[7] MURRAY, John F., "Discussion" in Rubin, Vera (ed.), *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium*, University of the West Indies, Institute of Social and Economic Research and Columbia University, 1957.

[8] SAFA, Helen S., *The Urban Poor of Puerto Rico*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1974.

[9] SMITH, R.T., *The Negro Family in British Guiana*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956.

[10] _____, "The Family in the Caribbean" in Rubin, Vera (ed.), *Caribbean Studies: A Symposium*, University of the West Indies, Institute of Social and Economic Research and Columbia University, 1957.

[11] _____, "The Matrifocal Family", in Goody, J., (ed.), *The Character of Kinship*, London: Cambridge University Press, 1973.

[12] SOLIEN, Nancie L., "Household and Family in the Caribbean", *Social and Economic Studies*, Volume 10, No. 1, March 1961.

VICTORIA DURANT GONZALEZ

THE REALM OF FEMALE FAMILIAL RESPONSIBILITY

Introduction

This paper deals with women's responsibility for child-rearing and child-caring in the English-speaking Caribbean. It will demonstrate that this responsibility stems from social and economic pressures such as single parenting, male sharing, and employment trends as well as from the cultural expectation that women should bear and/or rear children. The analysis is based upon the theoretical assumption that female access to sources of livelihood, power and authority, and emotional support systems, fosters or inhibits this familial responsibility.

Sources of livelihood is defined as access to social rewards: goods, services, and knowledge; and to the institutional options and choices open to female members of society. Power and authority are viewed as control over social rewards. Here social rewards express a bias towards a societal or systematic output. This broad definition allows for viewing sources of livelihood beyond that of market oriented labour, i.e. work for other people paid for in cash wages. It includes institutional arrangements such as the domestic group, economic, educational, religious, and political institutions. It also allows us to view power and authority beyond the narrow framework of visible formal power and its legitimate use. It includes the capacity of women to control events, to determine the behaviour of others in the face of resistance and to resist control by others and, more generally, to recognize that politics extends to norms and values and their allocation in society [personal communication with Neville C. Duncan]. Emotional support systems, in particular, are closely intermingled with sources of livelihood and authority and power and yet have their own existence. The focus here is on life processes and not material support rendered to women carrying out their responsibilities to self and others. Emotional support is generated from a wide range of female alliances which can be broadly categorized into female kinship alliances and female friendship alliances.

During the decade of the 1970s there was a flood of literature and research centred upon sex role definitions and the position of women in society; Caribbean scholars are contributors to that interest. This is reflected in the appearance of a special issue of the journal *Savacou* (1977) devoted to Caribbean women; George Roberts and Sonja Sinclair's *Women in Jamaica* (1978), and the design and implementation of a long-term, female-centred study, Women in the Caribbean Project (WCP), *inter alia*. Women's responsibility for child-rearing and child-bearing, referred to in this paper as the realm of female familial responsibility, is an overall concern of that project. The concepts, sources of livelihood, power and authority, and emotional support systems, provide the analytical devices for the project's investigation of women and education, family, law, politics and work. Also, these devices are used to analyse WCP's study of female perception, attitudes and values as related to the participation of women in Caribbean social life.

The WCP study is divided into two phases. The first, which has been completed and which covers the entire region, involved the collection and review of available printed materials and utilized a small pilot study designed to test the instruments for use in a larger field of study in the second phase which is currently underway. The second phase consists of survey and in-depth interviews of a sample of 1,600 women in: Antigua (500), Barbados (600), and St. Vincent (500).

This discussion draws from research in the first phase conducted in the areas of women and family, politics and work, as well as from findings from the pilot study. The pilot study consists of 27 interviews carried out among women in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad in the age range of 20-64 (see Appendix). It also draws upon my individual research carried out in Jamaica during the period 1974-1979. The pilot sample was selected on the basis of urban-rural and lower and middle socio-economic levels. In Barbados the survey sample was chosen at random while in the other two territories a network selection approach was used.

Realm of Female Responsibility

In the English-speaking Caribbean, an overwhelming majority of the female population is in charge of producing, providing, controlling, or managing those resources essential to meeting daily needs. We call these functions the realm of female responsibility to self and family. The realm of female responsibility is wide and takes many forms. It ranges from being singly in charge of economic resources and managing a household and its members, to sharing these responsibilities with a mate and/or relatives, to providing the full range of material and non-material needs of daily life. Such a wide range of familial responsibility is not unique to the English-speaking Caribbean nor is it unique to one sex. However, a finding from an action-oriented seminar on the integration of women in development shows that a "majority of women in the Caribbean have to bear a disproportionate amount of the responsibility for the care and upbringing of children" [18 p.4]. This seminar was held in Jamaica in June 1977 and attended by participants from both the English- and Spanish-speaking Caribbean. An important outcome of that week-long seminar, in which I was a participant observer, was the establishment of a regional body, Women and Development Unit (WAND), to coordinate programmes designed for the integration of women into the development of the region. This is a unit of the Extra Mural Department of the University of the West Indies. A goal of WAND is to create economic opportunities for women.

Further evidence of the wide scope of female familial responsibility is the high percentage of women who head households. Data from 14 of the 20 territories which make up the English-speaking Caribbean show the distribution of female heads of household [See Table 1, Massiah's article]. As these data suggest, single parenting is a reality for a large number of women in these territories. However, assuming responsibility for providing and managing resources for child-caring and rearing is not limited to single parent families. It is a common feature among women in the region irrespective of marital status.

Hermione McKenzie links female labour force participation with high rates of family responsibilities undertaken by women in the region [17 p.1]. This claim is supported by the data in Table 1 which shows the distribution of women workers in Barbados by union status.

Table 1: Proportional (%) Distribution of Women Workers in Barbados by Union Status, 1960 and 1970

Union Status	Women Workers			
	Aged 15-44		Aged 45-64	
	1960	1970	1960	1970
Married	18.5	23.4	34.4	41.2
Common Law	12.9	14.9	10.2	10.3
Visiting	5.4	3.9	0.1	0.1
Single	11.1	9.2	20.3	22.2
Never	52.0	48.7	35.1	26.2
Total	(22,245)	(21,389)	(10,321)	(10,653)

Source: Massiah [15 p.89].

The high percentage of married women workers shown for the decades 1960 and 1970 is evidence that providing resources for child-caring and -rearing is not limited to women who head single parent families. While it is recognized that some married women workers (in the Barbados data) work solely for personal satisfaction, others work to meet the basic needs of providing adequate levels of nutrition, clothing, medical care and education for their families. Findings from our pilot study support this and show that women in their mothering role are fully aware of their familial responsibilities and the social realities of these. A Barbadian woman who is head of her household says, "My children are my responsibility and I neglect most things to support them in the right way". For this woman, providing and managing resources for proper child care and the sacrifices which are part of carrying out these duties are everyday realities of the mothering role. It is part of the natural order of things which is reinforced by the experiences of other women in the community and in the family. Females in the region need not search far for role models of women who accept the fact that 'my children are my responsibility'. Implied in that statement is the view that child-bearing and -rearing mean providing for. Often times provision is done alone, i.e. without the aid of a mate. This practice is well documented in the anthropological, sociological and demographic literature of the region over a 50-year period.

A second dimension of the reality which surrounds familial responsibility is expressed by a Barbadian urban woman who is in a legal marital union. She says, "It makes more sense to be independent. If a husband skips home, the woman can take care of her children". The need for female financial independence is an objective reality as reflected by court intervention around this issue. Jean Jackson, for instance [this volume] found among a sample of 444 women utilizing the Family Court in Kingston, Jamaica, that problems of 'affiliation' (which refers to financial support for children of parents in non-legal unions) and 'maintenance' (which refers to financial support of children of married parents) are the main services requested by the majority of women in the sample.

'It makes more sense to be independent', reflects another reality faced by a large number of women in stable unions in their attempts to meet familial responsibility. That is, the irregularity of employment and high unemployment rates which characterize the region's labour force militates against men who are willing contributors to family financial resources. For example, labour force data for Jamaica show that in October 1979, 19.9 per cent of male workers were unemployed. Undoubtedly, some of these men, if able, are willing providers for their families.

'Male sharing', a common practice throughout the region, is another reason why it 'makes more sense for a woman to be independent'. Male sharing refers to the practice where one male is shared by more than one woman at the same time. The sharing also involves goods and services of various kinds provided by the male to the women who share him. A result of male sharing is a pattern of 'inside' and 'outside' children among men whose sexual services are shared by more than one woman. Typically, the inside child is from the marital union and the outside child is from an extra-marital union [Durant-Gonzalez 8].

Formerly, only inside children could inherit from a father. However, the decade of the 1970s brought about a major reform in the status of children born outside of legal marriage. During that period, Barbados and Jamaica passed Status of Children Acts. These acts eliminate illegitimate status for children, making all children legal under the law. While providing greater protection and rights for children, they take away exclusive custody of children from mothers as they give both mother and

father custody rights. These laws give all of a man's children the right to inherit his property.

This right has far-reaching implications for women in their legal married unions where husbands have children with women other than their legal spouse. One result is that married women can no longer be passive legal partners in property arrangements with spouses. My research among Jamaican women shows that it is common for a woman to be uninformed as to her husband's assets and/or to suddenly discover after many years of marriage - as in the case of one informant who had been married for 20 years - that her name is not on titles to property. In the case of the woman referred to, this discovery brought about a major examination of the nature of her relationship with her husband. Her feelings of openness, trust and integrity were undermined. The emotional impact of this discovery had a strong objective base. First, the wife is employed in a high-level civil service position, and has worked and contributed financially throughout the marriage. Second, she is childless, and during several discussions we had over the years had voiced her suspicions concerning outside children.

Thus, the passage of the Status of Children Acts in Barbados and Jamaica lends further support for the view that 'it makes more sense to be independent' - and independent beyond financial independence. These acts have removed the protective shield of the title 'Mrs.' against outside children and extra-marital women.

Based upon participant observation of women who engage in male sharing in Jamaica, my findings show that before the passage of the Status of Children Act, married women were not threatened by the existence of outside children nor by the surreptitious contributions of their husbands to outside children and extra-marital women, although such contributions meant that many wives received less of their husbands' goods and services, and were forced to create and generate independent financial resources. Seemingly, surreptitious contributions and independent resource generation could be accommodated under the protective covenant of the title 'Mrs.'. While it still confers some protection, it has been eroded by the Status of Children Act. It is my view that women in Barbados and Jamaica can no longer be passive actors in the practice of male sharing, especially in the legal

domain which surrounds the roles of mother, wife, child, and extra-marital woman. These acts effectively have removed two female privileges: exclusivity of child custody and inheritance by inside children only.

A third reality for women faced with the responsibility of providing for self and others is that of limited resources. Here scarcity of resources goes beyond that of cash resources to include access to the full range of goods and services which makes daily life possible. The distribution practice at supermarkets in Jamaica during periods of food shortages illustrates this. Food is distributed on a class basis rather than a cash one. During the period 1976-1979, I participated in and observed on a weekly basis the manner in which scarce items of food were made available to customers based upon class identification. Food distribution through class identification works in this way: typically, managers and supervisors service the middle and upper classes, while stock and shelf workers distribute to members of the middle and upper classes as well as to lower class customers. Scarce food items (usually basic foods: rice, flour, cornmeal, oil, chicken, etc.) are distributed surreptitiously. Obligatory ties are thus created with members of the middle and upper classes, one manifestation of which is requests by stock and shelf workers to these consumers for various goods and services, such as jobs for family and friends and purchase of items from overseas. In terms of the latter, it was common to observe middle and upper class customers handing packages to stock workers. However, access to scarce food by low level workers also put them in positions of power which provided opportunities for lower class customers to have access to basic foods.

In the supermarket worker hierarchy, access to scarce food is determined by the degree of the food shortage. Typically, during times of moderate shortage, managers, supervisors, stock and shelf workers have access, while in times of extreme and severe shortages, it is limited to managers. A consequence of removing access to the distribution of scarce food items from stock and shelf workers is that lower class customers are denied purchasing opportunities. Many of these customers are female heads of households. As the data in Table 1 [Massiah's article] show, for the 14 territories covered, the mean for female heads of household is 32.0 per cent and the mean household membership size is 4.0 persons. When these statistics are

coupled with social realities such as food distribution on the basis of class identification, it means that a large proportion of women in charge of providing and managing for self and others are forced to 'make do' in conditions of limited resources. This reality is explicitly expressed by the informant who says, "No one knows how I manage to bring up my children. In one instance I cannot buy Cow and Gate, in another instance I cannot buy cornmeal. Women have to make do".

Work for cash wages is a primary means of making do and carrying out the realm of female responsibility. Nadia Youssef reports that Jamaica has one of the highest female labour force activity rates among underdeveloped countries [26 p.429]. In 1978, for example, women workers made up 46.87 per cent of the total Jamaican labour force out of a population of 949,200 female and male workers [12 p.iii]. For some of these female workers, working provided self-fulfilment and economic independence. However, the vast majority are forced to work because of economic need; because of economic pressures to supplement inadequate wages of partners and/or filling in for their sporadic employment, and because they are the sole supporter of an entire family.

However, employment opportunities are another limited resource. For the labour force in the region outnumbers the available opportunities for paid labour. This is illustrated in Table 2 which shows labour force participation for the decade 1960 to 1970 in 15 Commonwealth Caribbean countries. The data in this table show a pattern of decline in labour force participation which has become characteristic of the region as a whole. The exception to this decline is the British Virgin Islands which is an under-populated country. Norma Abdulah [1 p.9] emphasizes three main factors which have given rise to this decline in labour force participation. They are:

1. a disproportionate loss through migration of persons of working age;

2. the average in the age-distribution of the population; and

3. an increase in school attendance among young persons aged 15-19 years.

TABLE 2: LABOUR FORCE (MAIN ACTIVITY) PARTICIPATION RATES COMMONWEALTH CARIBBEAN COUNTRIES 1960 AND 1970

Countries	1960			1970			Change in Participation Rates 1960-1970
	Population 15+ ('000)	Labour Force ('000)	Participation Rates	Population 15+ ('000)	Labour Force ('000)	Participation Rates	
	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)
All Countries	2,129.5	1,361.9	64.0	2,308.6	1,247.7	54.0	- 10.0
Jamaica	948.2	651.4	68.7	968.5	537.8	55.5	- 13.2
Trinidad-Tobago	476.9	278.1	58.3	539.4	284.7	52.8	- 5.5
Guyana	292.4	175.0	59.9	370.1	176.9	47.8	- 12.1
Barbados	143.4	92.1	64.2	148.0	89.1	60.2	- 4.0
Belize	50.2	27.0	53.8	60.8	32.3	53.1	- 0.7
St. Lucia	48.0	31.4	65.4	50.3	28.6	56.9	- 8.5
Grenada	46.4	27.3	58.8	49.1	28.4	57.8	- 1.0
St. Vincent	40.6	24.9	61.3	42.1	23.2	55.1	- 6.2
Dominica	33.1	23.4	70.7	35.4	20.9	59.0	- 11.7
St. Kitts-Nevis	31.3	19.6	62.6	23.0	12.9	56.1	- 6.5
Montserrat	6.7	4.3	61.2	6.9	3.8	55.1	- 6.1
Cayman Islands	4.7	3.2	68.1	6.2	3.5	56.5	- 11.6
British Virgin Islands	4.4	2.1	47.7	5.9	3.9	66.1	+ 18.4
Turks and Caicos Islands	3.1	2.1	67.7	2.9	1.6	55.2	- 12.5

Source: Abdulah [1] p.10.

Combined with these factors is the fact that population growth in the region is faster than the growth rate of jobs. Declines in labour force participation often result in widening the labour force participation gap between men and women. For example, in Jamaica, labour force data show that during October 1978, women represented 39.47 per cent of the actual employed labour force and 67.95 per cent of total unemployed labour. Among these unemployed women is a large proportion of household heads. Thus, limited employment opportunity is a primary determinant of 'how women manage'.

While work for cash wage is a primary means to 'how women manage' child-rearing and child-caring, the opportunity for employment in jobs paying adequate wages is yet another limited resource. This inadequacy is illustrated by the majority of job types and wages paid to the 39.47 per cent of women represented in the employed labour force in Jamaica. Seventy per cent were in low-paying, low-skilled and marginal jobs. Seventy-eight per cent of those employed earned under $30 per week (at that time the minimum weekly wage was $24 per week; it has since been increased to $30 per week).

A parallel situation exists among female workers in Barbados. Joycelin Massiah shows that the majority of women workers are employed in service, clerical and sales jobs. Among these occupational sectors the highest concentration of female workers is in the service sector. In 1970, for example, there were 10,500 female workers in service jobs, 8,800 in clerical and 3,100 in sales, and in professional and technical occupations. The service category consists of two main sub-groups: personal service and protective service. It is the former sub-group that employs the vast majority of the service workers. There were 7,700 women or more than 70 per cent employed as domestic workers. This occupation is the most menial, lowest paying, and requires the least amount of skills [15 pp.48, 50].

Female participation in low-paying, low-skilled and marginal job categories means that a large percentage of the employed female labour force in these countries do not earn a wage that would satisfy basic needs such as adequate levels of nutrition, clothing, medical care, and education for themselves and their children. In 1979, for example, a pair of children's shoes cost $30, or six dollars more than the minimum wage at that time.

Bolles shows that female factory workers are able to 'make do' with inadequate wages through their extended family arrangements. Sixteen out of the 44 women in her sample reported that "they received a 'little something' from all those [household members] who were working" [37 p.6]. Findings from my study of rural Jamaican women support this and also show that inadequate wages are supplemented by remittances from overseas [Durant-Gonzalez 6].

One explanation for the concentration of 70 per cent of employed female labour force in Jamaica in low-paying, low-skilled, and marginal jobs, is the over-representation of women workers in the traditional or informal sector of Caribbean economies. WCP research indicates that throughout the territories of the Eastern Caribbean, women predominate in the informal economic sector. The presence of female workers in that sector is so great that a major thesis of the WCP study of women and work is that femaleness acts to ensure that a woman is more likely than a man to find work in the informal sector.

An illustration of this is the over-representation of women in the internal market system throughout the Caribbean and their influence on creating and maintaining marketplace standards. Empirical evidence from the domain of the marketplace in Jamaica supports this view. Historically, and to the present time, women have dominated the internal produce market system of that country. Today, 'higglering', the local term for market occupation - 'higgler' being the term applied to those who perform the role - is known as a female occupation, although there are a few male higglers. When a male higgler excels at higglering, it is common to hear female higglers say 'Him act like a woman'. The converse is applied to unsuccessful male higglers, 'Him do not know how to act like a woman' [Durant-Gonzalez 6].

Such assessment of ability and achievement reflects the fact that within the domain of the marketplace, women create, maintain, and reinforce the standards by which achievement is measured. At a broader level these market women illustrate a significant element related to value placed upon social position within certain social domains. That is, it is somewhat within the control of the participants to create their own standard or to accept that of the wider society. It further suggests that while carrying out the activities of everyday life, members of society

create their own status symbols within their immediate domain. The higgler is an excellent example, for in the market domain women achieve high status in performing this role, while in the wider society the role is generally viewed as a low status one. Considering the status of the higgler is instructive in that it indicates that indices of female status are complex, showing variations under different social conditions and within different social settings in the same society. Higglering supports Naomi Quinn's claim of the wide variation in female status. She argues [20 p.183] that "in any given society, this status may be very 'low' in some domains of behaviour, approach equality with men's status in others, and even, in some domains, surpass the status of men". The role of market women and its variations in conferred status in the society as a whole, in the local farm community, and in the marketplace, reflects Quinn's definitions of low status, approaching equality to men, and surpassing the status of men, respectively.

The concentration of female workers in menial low-paying and low-skilled jobs denies access to opportunities for women to achieve the social recognition and social esteem necessary to elevate their status in their own eyes, the eyes of their families, and the country as a whole. For the 78 per cent of the female labour force in Jamaica who earn less than $30 per week, employment alone is not a viable means of meeting their domestic obligations. Thus, when a Trinidadian woman in our pilot sample says, "Woman is a donkey. She works at work, then comes home and works again", she is expressing more than the drudgery of work duality, i.e. combining work in the public domain with that of the domestic. She is also expressing the fact that for many women an economic reality of being locked into dead-end jobs is that of little or no social mobility and a wage that is inadequate to provide minimum standards of subsistence.

Full acceptance of women into the productive process from which self-fulfilment, economic independence, political participation, and autonomy in the home are derived, are major concerns of Caribbean social planners, scholars and governments today. These concerns are reflective of the social and economic realities discussed in this paper and illustrated in the recent establishment of women's desks and commissions on women as well as the appearance of such women's organizations as Caribbean Women's Association, Caribbean Church Women, Women and Development Unit of the Extra Mural Department, and female centred research conducted at the University of the West Indies, the WCP

being an example. Further evidence of the emphasis on female participation in regional development is the presence of Caribbean women in United Nations regional commissions, such as the Economic Commission of Latin America and the Organization of American States' Inter-American Commission of Women. A major focus of these organizations is on action oriented programmes - programmes that will generate economic and social resources to enable women to meet their family responsibilities, develop special talents, and pursue individual interests.

Cultural Expectations

The realm of female familial responsibility is an outgrowth of the cultural expectation placed upon women to enter the child-bearing career. "This career is the active reproductive period in the life history of a woman; it is signaled by the birth of the first child and is closed at the birth of the last child" [Durant-Gonzalez 6 p.36]. Theoretically, in the Caribbean the active reproductive period of a woman is as long as 30 years, from puberty to menopause. Oftentimes the child- earing career is augmented and extended by the practice of the mother's rearing of offspring of her own children. For those women who are biologically incapable of reproducing, there is an informal adoption system that exists throughout the region which makes child-rearing available to most women.[Henriques 9 p.138]. Thus, if all women cannot bear children, then almost all may rear and care for children. There is a general belief that physical and emotional deterioration result from a lack of child-rearing. Such beliefs were explicitly stated by subjects in our sample. For example, a Trinidadian woman with a secondary education says, "Putting off having children most times lead women to be sickly". Another member of our sample explained, "Sometimes when you do not have children, you can be unhappy". And another woman sees childbearing as 'a very enriching experience'. These data were collected in 1980 and, significantly, are parallel to data collected by Madeline Kerr in the 1940s, in terms of the consequences of failure to reproduce. The following quotation in Kerr's discussion of attitudes toward pregnancy in Jamaica [14 p.25] reflects this: "An almost universal belief is that each woman is destined to have a certain number of children and she will not have good health unless she does. If she does not have this correct number she will be nervous, have headaches, or even go insane".

The realm of female familial responsibility is also an outgrowth of the cultural value placed on the mother role. Early anthropological studies of family organization in the Caribbean show that there was a high status and value attached to the mother role [Blake 2, Kerr 14, Henriques 9]. The WCP data show that this is still true.

While there is continuity in the status and value placed upon child-bearing and mothering, our data from the Antigua and St. Vincent samples indicate changes. The changes are in the conditions under which women are willing to enter the child-bearing career and the number of children they are willing to have. Typically, subjects of the sample hold the view that a woman should have the security of an education and a good job, and should be at least 20 years of age before entering that career. Also, there is a general feeling among members of the sample that the number of children should be determined by biological and economic factors. Suggested here is a turning away from the influence of divine providence found in Kerr's work and towards individual control over life chances by objective means, i.e. the use of birth control and planning. However, as demonstrated above, the cultural expectation that women should bear children is a strong one which most women fulfil. In fact, it is argued elsewhere that conformity to this expectation is so great that "the role of childless, adult female is an empty role in the sense that it lacks role models, and is unclear and ill-defined within Caribbean societies" [Durant-Gonzalez 6 p.191].

Acceptance of that cultural expectation is closely tied to acceptance of the view that 'my children are my responsibility' expressed by the Barbadian woman in our pilot study. Child-bearing is further linked to the emergence of a sense of womanhood. In fact, having a child serves as a *rite de passage* from that of a girl to that of adult. This status change is often manifested in the conferring of the title 'Miss' upon adolescent girls after the birth of a child. The link between child-bearing and the emergence into womanhood is so closely intertwined that it is our theoretical assumption that child-bearing and/or rearing and the accompanying acceptance of the responsibility are the main determinant factors of a self-image of womanhood in Caribbean societies.

Our data show that a sense of womanhood is conceptualized by participants in our sample as having some

degree of independence, being viewed as responsible and dependable, and having some degree of control over self and others; with contribution to the economic process and mothering as the two greatest determinants of womanhood. Entry into the child-bearing career is a way of fostering these and is one open to most women. The child-bearing career brings with it duties and obligations which place women in positions of decision-making. It brings with it some autonomy and in many instances provides the major area for autonomous action by women. Women who conform to its behavioural expectations acquire the label of 'good mumma' and are known in both the family and community as responsible and dependable, as persons who are to be admired and looked-up-to. Mothering, having high status and value, provides opportunities for rewards and achievements that cannot be provided by the menial jobs engaged in by 70 per cent of the employed female labour force in Jamaica.

The fact that a majority of working women are employed in dead-end jobs does not mean that work has no meaning for them. It has a great deal of meaning. For example, it is a primary means of meeting familial responsibilities, and it is an integral part of the self-image of womanhood. Members in our sample cite independence as a component in the conceptualization of womanhood. For these women independence is broad and is both real and perceived. It has to do with having access to money, but it has more to do with a sense of having options, of being able to make decisions, and it establishes a self-image as that of a contributor to the household and a participant in the economic sector. A sense of independence is also generated from the fact that work broadens the social field for many women, placing them in positions to form ties with a wide range of individuals. Domestic workers, for example, often receive goods and services from their employers. One such worker in St. Vincent reports that her employer was instrumental in enabling three of her five children to attend secondary school. The experiences of market women who sell at urban markets is another example. As a result of in-town work, market women meet a variety of people who provide them with a wide range of services, two of which are agricultural knowledge and entry into the wholesale buying of manufactured goods. There are countless examples of spin-offs such as these received by women in menial jobs. However, germane to this discussion is not what is received, but the opportunity generated for independent action and decision-making on the part of women. Such spin-offs result in elevating

their status through social recognition by family and community. The higgler who boasts that she does not buy from the local shop, but in bulk at the wholesaler in town, is viewed with both envy and respect by community members. This is also true in the case of the Vincentian domestic worker, as a result of having had three children complete secondary school and go on to the University of the West Indies at Mona. A manifestation of this recognition is that she now has received, at the age of 55, the honorific community title of 'Mother'. Clearly, the social recognition that our Jamaican higgler and Vincentian domestic worker receive is not embodied solely in their occupation, but is a reflection of the respect for creative social participation or of what an informant from the pilot study characterizes as 'women have to make do'. Thus, for a vast majority of women in the English-speaking Caribbean their image of womanhood is that of both mother and worker. This is parallel to "the typical African woman [who] thinks of herself as a cultivator or trader as well as a wife and mother; her occupational role is part of her self-image" [Quoted by Smock 24 pp. 175, 176], and is alien to the American middle class phenomenon of full-time motherhood.

Participation in economic production and population growth are determinant factors in formulating a self-image of womanhood among Caribbean females, but is this self-image the ideal? Or is it simply a reflection of the realities of pressures from a pattern of high percentages of single parent households, high unemployment among males, male sharing, and the fulfilment of a cultural expectation? Analysis of the data from our survey sample of 1,600 women will increase our knowledge of the way in which Caribbean women conceptualize womanhood and will extend our understanding of the meaning of work to their daily lives.

Conclusions

In conclusion, let us return to our theoretical assumption: that access to sources of livelihood, power and authority, and emotional support systems, fosters or inhibits carrying out child-rearing and -caring. Our findings show that access does foster women's ability to meet familial duties and obligations. However, limited access to work opportunities, inability to acquire an education, and lack of political participation inhibit them.

The over-representation of the female work force in low-paying, low skilled and menial jobs in Barbados and Jamaica is an example of the way in which limited work opportunities impair child-caring. Access to menial jobs provides a minimal source of livelihood for women and for the children for whom they must provide. At best, such jobs are a source of livelihood at the subsistence level, and do not enable women or their children to develop capabilities and talents that can contribute to the national economic and social development of these countries. In the case of Jamaica, the fact that 70 per cent of the female labour force earn a wage that cannot provide basic needs such as adequate levels of nutrition, clothing, medical care, and education for children, ensures a next generation of menial job workers. This pattern mitigates against economic and social development.

This paper has demonstrated that by affirming and reinforcing the cultural expectation of child-bearing and/or child-rearing, many women gain social rewards and social recognition not attainable solely at the level from which they participate in economic production. However, conformity to this cultural expectation often inhibits access to the opportunity structure through education. This is due to the fact that there is a policy in the education system which denies continuing education to girls who become pregnant while still in school. This policy exists throughout the region, in spite of the fact that the teenage pregnancy rate is high. The work of Dorian Powell on teenage pregnancy in Jamaica shows that teenagers accounted for 26 per cent of the births in 1973, 30 per cent in 1974, and 33 per cent in 1975 [19 p.5]. This restrictive policy on pregnancy-birth and continuing school is so pervasive and socially accepted that it does not require school officials to place direct pressure on pregnant girls to drop out of school. I am told by respondents in our in-depth interview sample, whose schooling

was terminated due to pregnancy, that there was no need to be told not to return to school. A 59-year-old respondent in Antigua, who is the mother of 14 children, reflects this unspoken agreement with this policy when she said, "Nobody has to tell you not to go back, you just know it". Powell found that in her sample of 100 first-time pregnant teenage girls 52 of them had left school because of pregnancy [19 p.26]. All 52 left voluntarily without any direct pressure from school officials. These illustrations suggest that the negative sanction against attendance in school while pregnant is generally complied with. Thus, some females become victimized by conformity to a cultural expectation that rewards them on the one hand and punishes them on the other.

Preliminary findings from the Antigua and St. Vincent samples show that many women, irrespective of social class, have been denied access to the opportunity structure by a policy which is at variance with empirical reality. This is an area where I see that WCP data can be used to make a major contribution to policy change. In my view, justification for the removal of the restriction on pregnancy-birth and school attendance should be made on economic grounds. In practical terms, it is poor utilization of monetary funds and human resources for countries and families to invest for 10 or more years in school for a girl and then cast her aside before benefits from the investment can be realized in the form of contributions to social and economic development to the kin group and the country.

Access to power and authority through political participation is another means of fostering women's ability to child-rearing and caring. However, there is a gap between legal access to the political structure and actual political participation by women in the region. This gap is reflected by the fact that although suffrage was granted in Caribbean countries such as Cuba in 1936, Barbados in 1951, Haiti in 1950, Jamaica in 1944, and Trinidad in 1946, there is a pattern of low voter participation by females. Female political participation in Jamaica and Barbados is representative of the region as a whole. Carl Stone [25 p.54] shows that for Jamaica:

> there is a constantly higher level of male as against female political participation at all levels of political involvement in spite of the female-dominated household and family pattern existing at many levels of the society. The

> higher level of male involvement in these electoral activities indicates that male domination of the leadership positions in the parties is complemented by greater male involvement in political participation.

Research on female political participation in Barbados shows a parallel female voting pattern to that in Jamaica. Duncan and O'Brien report [5 p.2]:

> The percentage of registered females who voted in each election year was disappointingly less than their proportion in the electorate, varying between 51.2 per cent in 1951 to a high point of 55.0 per cent in 1961. Additionally, the turnout of female voters has never exceeded 59 per cent. This compares unfavourably with the turnout of male voters which for 1951, 1956, and 1961, was 74.4, 67.1 and 66.6 per cent respectively. The national turnout for these years was 64.6, 60.3, 61.3, respectively.

These findings by Stone, Duncan and O'Brien suggest that the position of leadership occupied by a large proportion of women within the domestic group is not reflected in their political participation. An explanation for this might be that for some women a dominant role in the domestic group and participating in economic production are important elements of Caribbean women's conceptualization of womanhood, while female political participation is not a part of that conceptualization. There is evidence to support this view from the pilot study in Barbados. Those data show that there is a stigma attached to women becoming politicians. This view is illustrated by a respondent who said:

> some women with ability are afraid of the dirtiness of politics. It would be hard on their families and children to hear remarks being made about their mother on a political platform.

The view that politics is dirty - all right for men but off limits for women - indicates that there is a double standard: men can engage in dirt and have their positions unchallenged, while this would undermine the position of women. Another respondent expressed the stigma this way:

> I admire these modern girls who are speaking out, but I don't know how they manage their families. Their families must suffer.

Seemingly, for these women their mother image in the community and in the domestic group is of more significance than political participation, in spite of the fact that participating politically can aid the duties, obligations and rights and privileges of mothering.

This view among some women that politics is dirty business, inappropriate to their image of womanhood, is one explanation for the imbalance between female and male candidates participating in general elections in Barbados over a 20-year period. Table 3 shows this imbalance.

Table 3: Total Number of All Candidates and of Female Candidates in Each General Election, 1951-1976

	1951	1956	1961	1966	1971	1976
Total No. of Candidates	46	63	60	59	50	60
Total No. of Female Candidates	1	1	2	0	2	5

Source: Duncan and O'Brien [5] p.3.

Another explanation for this imbalance between male and female candidates might be a lack of independent pursuance of self-interest on the part of women. Support of this is found in the work of Simmonds on Jamaica. Based upon survey poll data, he found that educated women tended to marry elite men rather than independently following elite-type careers [23 p.186]. However, this does not reflect the fact that in 1975 in that country there was one female minister of local government, a female permanent secretary, a female general manager of a statutory board, a female trade union general secretary, and a female ambassador [Durant-Gonzalez 7 p.1].

The pattern of low levels of female participation in the region demonstrates the gap between a legal change in the social structure and the persistence of traditional attitudes about female political roles. In my view such traditional attitudes inhibit women, preventing them from maximizing advantages of the political structure to serve their child-bearing and child-rearing interests. Two examples of how this interest could be served are 1) removal of policies such as the pregnancy-birth restriction

on continuing education, and 2) establishment of better wages. Thus the persistence of traditional attitudes against female political participation conflicts with those of women to bear and rear children.

Data from our pilot study on the manner in which emotional support systems foster or inhibit women's ability to meet their familial responsibility are too limited for a discussion here. However, my work on Jamaican higglers shows that participation in higglering is facilitated by female alliances. These are both kin and friendship alliances and facilitate child-care, knowledge sharing, and moral support. Another important function served by these community support systems among higglers is that of ensuring higglers continued income during periods of absence from the market. For example, when a market woman is unable to go to market, she sends her weekly produce by another higgler who sells the produce and brings her the money. This system ensures continuity in earnings vital to a family for which it is often the only weekly source of cash [Durant-Gonzalez 6].

In the work of A. Lynn Bolles [3] there is further evidence of the manner in which emotional support fosters child-care. It has already been mentioned that her work shows that inadequate female wages are augmented by cash contributions from other household members. Bolles also shows that the extended family living arrangement of the female factory workers she studied released them from doing domestic tasks. These tasks were usually undertaken by household members who were at home because of unemployment [Bolles 3 p.6]. The condition of these factory workers is unlike that of our Trinidadian respondent who described woman as "a donkey [who] works at work and then comes home and works again".

In sum, this analysis shows that a vast majority of Caribbean women are caught and bounced around in a set of conflicting cultural, economic and social forces. These forces at times work toward women's self-interest and at other times against it. For example, conformity to the cultural expectation to bear children brings social rewards and social recognition while leading to a greater necessity to participate in the work force. However, the economic system is unable to accommodate this necessity, and for those it *can* accommodate, wages are at a subsistence level. Social conditions have brought about suffrage, but there is not a large number of women using the vote. Culture enters the set of forces again with attitudes against women holding political office.

References

[1] ABDULAH, Norma, *Labour Force in the Commonwealth Caribbean*, St. Augustine, Trinidad: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1975.

[2] BLAKE, Judith, *Family Structure in Jamaica*, New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1975.

[3] BOLLES, A. Lynn, "The Flexible Family: Urban Working Class Family Structure in Kingston", a paper presented at the American Anthropological Meetings in Cincinnati, Ohio, 1979.

[4] CUMMINS, Diane and GILL, Margaret D., "Analysis of Pilot Study: Barbados Sample", Women in the Caribbean Project, Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1980.

[5] DUNCAN, Neville and O'BRIEN, Kenneth, "Women and Politics in Barbados", Women in the Caribbean Project, Volume 3, *Women and Politics*, Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1982.

[6] DURANT-GONZALEZ, Victoria, "Role and Status of Rural Jamaican Women: Higglering and Mothering", unpublished Ph.D Thesis, Berkeley, California: University of California, 1976.

[7] _____, "Female Labor Force Participation: The Jamaican Case", paper presented at the Conference on the Impact of Development on Women in the Caribbean, University of Minnesota, St. Paul Campus, 8-9 February 1980.

[8] _____, "Women in the Caribbean Project", a paper presented at the Caribbean Studies Association Meeting in St. Thomas at the College of the Virgin Islands, 27-31 May 1981.

[9] HENRIQUES, Fernando, *Family and Colour in Jamaica*, London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1953.

[10] JACKSON, Jean, "Stresses Affecting Women and their Families", Women in the Caribbean Project, Volume 2, *Women and the Family*, Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1982.

[11] JACKSON, Jean, "Analysis of Pilot Study: Trinidad Sample", Women in the Caribbean Project, Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1980.

[12] JAMAICA, Department of Statistics, *Labour Force*, 1978, Kingston, Jamaica: 1979.

[13] _____, National Planning Agency, *Economic and Social Survey*, Kingston, Jamaica: 1979.

[14] KERR, Madeline, *Personality and Conflict in Jamaica*, London: Collins, 1963.

[15] MASSIAH, Joycelin, "Women in Barbados: Some Demographic Aspects of their Employment", National Commission on the Status of Women, *Report: Vol. 2*, Barbados: Ministry of the Attorney General, 1978.

[16] _____, "Indicators of Women in Development: A Preliminary Framework for the Caribbean", Women in the Caribbean Project, Volume 6, *Women, Work and Development*, Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1982.

[17] MCKENZIE, Hermione, "Changing Female Educational Opportunities in Jamaica", a paper presented at the International Sociological Association: IX World Congress of Sociology Research Committee 32: Sex Roles in Society, n.d.

[18] "PLAN OF ACTION for Women in the CARICOM Region", Seminar for the Integration of Women in Development, held at the Extra Mural Centre at the University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, 1977.

[19] POWELL, Dorian, "Adolescent Pregnancy: Some Preliminary Observations on a Group of Urban Young Women" (mimeo), Department of Sociology, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica, n.d.

[20] QUINN, Naomi, "Anthropological Studies on Women's Status", in Seigel, Bernard J.et al. (eds.), *Annual Review of Anthropology*, Palo Alto, California: Annual Review Inc., 1977.

[21] ROBERTS, George and SINCLAIR, Sonja, *Women in Jamaica: Patterns of Reproduction and Family*, New York: KTO Press, 1978.

[22] SAVACOU, "Caribbean Women", Volume 13, 1977.

[23] SIMMONDS, Keith C., "The Political Elite of Jamaica: Recruitment Patterns, 1962-72", unpublished Ph.D Thesis, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1977.

[24] SMOCK, Audrey Chapman, "Ghana: From Autonomy to Subordination", in Giele, Janet Zollinger and Smock, Audrey Chapman (eds.), *Women's Roles and Status in Eight Countries*, New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1977.

[25] STONE, Carl, *Electoral Behaviour and Public Opinion in Jamaica*, Mona, Jamaica: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1974.

[26] YOUSSEF, Nadia, "Social Structure and the Female Labour Force: The Case of Women Workers in Muslim Middle Eastern Countries", *Demography*, Volume 8, No. 4, 1971.

Appendix

Characteristics	Pilot Project Territories		
	Trinidad	Barbados	Jamaica
Relationship to Head of Household			
Head	3	6	3
Spouse/partner of head	3	7	2
Child of head	-	2	-
Other	-	1	-
Total	6	16	5
Age			
20 - 24	-	2	-
25 - 29	1	1	-
30 - 34	-	2	2
35 - 39	3	1	-
40 - 44	-	1	-
45 - 49	1	3	1
50 - 54	1	5	-
55 - 59	-	1	-
60 - 65	-	-	2
Total	6	16	5

Characteristics	Pilot Project Territories		
	Trinidad	Barbados	Jamaica
Race			
Black	3	16	4
Mixed	2	-	1
East Indian	1	-	-
Total	6	16	5
Educational Attainment			
Less than 4 years primary	-	-	-
Four and more years primary	2	9	4
Less than 4 years secondary	1	-	1
Four and more years secondary	1	7	-
University	2	-	-
Total	6	16	5
Employment Status			
Self Employed	-	1	-
Employed by others	4	9	2
Home Handicraft	-	1	-
Home Services	1	4	-
Not Employed	1*	1	3
Total	6	16	5

*Student

Characteristics	Pilot Project Territories		
	Trinidad	Barbados	Jamaica
Socio-Economic Status			
Lower Income Urban	1	6	n.a.
Middle Income Urban	5	5	n.a.
Lower Income Rural	-	4	n.a.
Middle Income Rural	-	-	n.a.
Total	6	16	5

Source: For Trinidad: Jackson [11] pp. 2 and 3.
For Barbados: Cummins & Gill [4] pp. 1 and 2.
For Jamaica: Bernal, personal communication.

28

JEAN JACKSON

STRESSES AFFECTING WOMEN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Introduction

It can be said that family conflict and personal unhappiness are inevitable experiences in all cultures [Goode 9]. Family conflicts will vary not only according to types of environments but also in terms of environmental changes and the spread of such changes. One would expect, for example, that in a setting of rapid changes in sex-role definitions, e.g. working mothers and child care arrangements, behavioural changes and stress situations generated by family conflict will be more evident.

Parad [20 p.12] postulates that some of these situations "are related to the normal phases of psychological and social development, and some are accidental and peculiar to the lives of certain individuals, families or segments of the population".

Just as the types and levels of family conflict vary from culture to culture, so too preventive and corrective mechanisms adopted by each culture will vary.

Whatever the reasons and causative factors which precipitate stressful situations, external supportive systems must be made available to alleviate some of these pressures in the event that the individual is emotionally and physically unable to cope or lacks any further mechanisms to deal with the stressful conditions.

Florence Hollis highlights the importance of external support when she states [11 p.81] that "Recognition of the extent to which environmental deficiencies contribute to the woes of individuals and families, has led to increased attention in recent years to the importance of environmental or milieu work".

Primary external support systems include social service agencies which are established specifically to deal with pressing needs and problems. The Family Court of Jamaica is one such agency.

This paper is based on records of 444 female clients who during the period 1976-1980 sought assistance from the Family Court with respect to family problems. The

data extracted from these records have been supplemented by material derived from in depth interviews with selected women.

The paper discusses briefly the range of situations which may generate family conflicts and examines the demographic and social characteristics of the women concerned. Further, it discusses types of conflicts or problems and shows how these vary according to selected factors. Our main interest at this time is in the stresses that women, particularly mothers, experience in the family; the data utilized have therefore excluded men.

The Family Court of Jamaica

The Jamaican Family Court which was established in October 1975 has jurisdiction for the following acts: The Affiliation Act, The Maintenance Act, The Juveniles Act, The Children (Guardianship and Custody) Act, The Status of Children Act, The Education Act, and The Married Women's Property Act.

The Family Court has its major office in Kingston and serves primarily clients in the Kingston metropolitan area. A second branch established in 1978 is located in the parish of St. James to the west of the island. The court falls administratively under the Ministry of Justice and aims at providing legal and social welfare services within the institutional framework. The demand for services is high. For the year 1978, 7,090 persons were seen by the intake counsellors in Kingston and 4,035 persons dealt with in St. James. Approximately 50 per cent of the cases were settled without resort to the judicial process [12]. In 1980, 6,210 cases were dealt with, of which 4,101 cases involved child support.

Settlement of cases through family counselling and avoiding recourse to the judicial process form an important part of the philosophy of the Family Court as its focus is both preventive and corrective.

The institution incorporates legal as well as social services, so that family issues can be handled either through the social process or the legal channel. Some of the problems handled under legal matters are:

i) affiliation - support for children of parents in non-legal unions;

ii) maintenance - support for children of married parents;

iii) conflicts regarding custody of children (Children (Guardianship and Custody) Act);

iv) child care and juvenile matters (The Education Act, Juveniles Act);

v) married women's property matters;

vi) the Children (Adoption) Act.

With respect to the legal component, there are three acts of primary relevance to this paper which it may be instructive to comment on.

The first, the Affiliation Act[1] states that "An Affiliation order means an order adjudging a man to be the putative father of a child, and ordering him to pay a sum of money weekly or otherwise" [16]. This act was amended in 1975 to extend the age qualification for paternal support from 14 years to 16 years and, with the judge's discretion, to 18 years. In addition, a means test condition for child support was introduced which removed the original fixed amount of $4.00 per week.

The second act, the Maintenance Act, considers both mother and child and states "Every man is hereby required to maintain his own children and also every child, whether born in wedlock or not which his wife may have living at the time of her marriage with him .... Every man shall be liable and is hereby required to maintain his wife, irrespective of her being able to maintain herself" [15]. This Act previously carried a fixed amount of $8.00 per week for child support, but like the Affiliation Act, it was amended in 1975 to include the extension of age and the means test.

The amendments were designed to alleviate some of the stresses encountered by women, especially social and economic problems. Further, they resulted in greater parity between married and unmarried women in terms of their entitlement to child support. However, the unmarried woman is still at a disadvantage

as she, unlike the married woman, does not qualify for maintenance for herself. Nonetheless, the flexibility of the orders does signify some measure of improvement in the economic situation of women.

The third act of specific relevance to the issues to be discussed is the Status of Children Act. This act has to be interpreted against the background of the existing family patterns in Jamaica. A large number of children born in Jamaica are to women in non-legal unions. Traditionally, children of such unions have been labelled 'illegitimate'. As such they tended to experience social and legal disadvantages not experienced by children born to parents in legal unions.

The Status of Children Act of 1976 [17] represents a vital step in the direction of improvement in the conditions of children. It outlawed the term 'illegitimate' as a legal concept and made all children equal under the law. The act states, "For all purposes of the law of Jamaica, the relationship between every person and his father and mother shall be determined irrespective of whether the father and mother are or have been married to each other and all other relationships shall be determined accordingly".

The act has broadened the rights of children to include inheritance benefits from fathers regardless of the marital status of mothers at the birth of their children. Though this may serve to reduce stresses on women regarding the future security of their children, such benefit is not altogether automatic for all children. Mothers whose children are born outside the legal union, unlike married mothers, have to provide satisfactory proof of paternity.

With respect to obtaining inheritance benefits, according to the Status of Children Act evidence of paternity can be established through at least one of the following:

i) appearance of father's name on the birth certificate of the child;

ii) declaration of paternity form signed by both parents;

iii) an order of support (affiliation) previously pursued and made through the court either locally or in a foreign country.

As long as paternity has been established, all children are entitled to inherit from their fathers' estate; although the wishes of the testator, through the will, are usually considered. However, the welfare of the child can be the overriding factor in the decision.

Though it seems that the spirit of the act was intended to ease the burden on Jamaican women and their children it also gave consideration to the rights of fathers. Unlike the previous Guardianship and Custody Act which recognized only the mother with respect to children born out of wedlock, the Status of Children Act now makes both parents equally eligible for custody.

The social component of the Family Court functions through a number of agencies and services as follows:

i) Child Care and Protection Service which focuses on all matters dealing with the care and protection of children;

ii) Probation Service with objectives which centre around voluntary and statutory supervision, supervision of juveniles who present serious behavioural problems and legal offenders;

iii) the Family Counselling Service whose attention is geared towards marriage and family counselling;

iv) the Intake Counselling Department, which serves a screening and sorting function of all cases that enter the Family Court system.

The intake officer makes a careful assessment of the nature of the problem as presented by the client and then makes referrals to the appropriate social agency. The department also does a certain amount of family counselling mainly related to securing voluntary child support agreements.

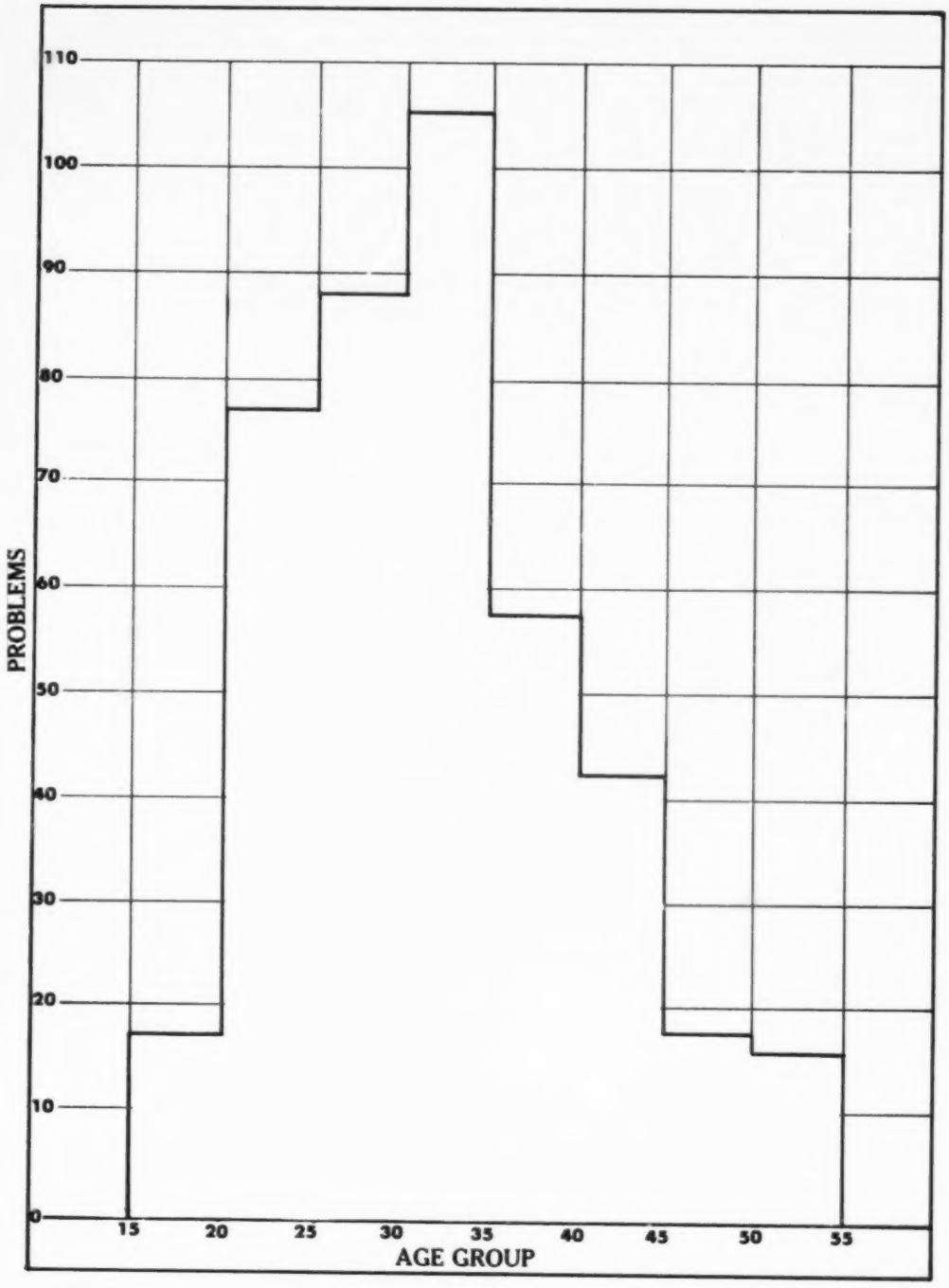


FIGURE I: DISTRIBUTION OF AGE GROUPS PRESENTING PROBLEMS

Social and Demographic Characteristics

The data presented below relate to 444 cases, a one in ten sample of all available female records at the Family Court for the period 1976 to 1980. One limitation of the data available to us was the absence of reliable entries relating to number of children of each woman. The records include only those children who were at the centre of the conflict, that is for whom support was sought. Since a woman could have children by more than one man, entries for children could be an undercount of total children, so were not used.

Tables 1 and 2 give details of age, marital status, worker status and occupational groupings.

The largest single group of the clients (24 per cent) is in the 30-34 age group. Nearly two-thirds of the women presenting problems fall below age 35. The mean age is 31.6 years. Figure 1 presents the data by age.

More than half of the women are single and nearly one-third are separated. Nine per cent are either married or in common-law unions, and under 1 per cent are divorced.

When we look at the work status of these women, we find that 50 per cent are employed and nearly one in three are unemployed. Worker status was not recorded for 18 per cent of the sample and in addition, 3 per cent described themselves as housewives.

The majority of the women, approximately 27.5 per cent, consists of a mixed group labelled in Table 2 as domestics. Clerical and skilled workers form the second largest group, both with 17.6 per cent followed by professional and self-employed, each with approximately 11 per cent.

The profile of the sample therefore is that the women tend to be single, under 35 years of age, are likely to be employed and to be non-professionals.

Table 1: Family Court Clients by Age Group, Marital Status and Worker Status

Age Group / Category	Number of Women	Proportion	Cumulative Proportions
(a) Age Group			
15-19	18	4.1	-
20-24	77	17.3	21.4
25-29	88	19.8	41.2
30-34	105	23.6	64.8
35-39	58	13.1	77.9
40-44	41	9.2	87.1
45-49	18	4.1	91.2
50+	17	3.8	95.0
Not Stated	22	5.0	
Total	444	100.0	100.0
(b) Marital Status			
Single	265	59.7	
Married*	40	9.0	
Separated	135	30.4	
Divorced	4	0.9	
Total	444	100.0	
(c) Worker Status			
Employed	222	50.0	
Unemployed	132	29.7	
Housewives	11	2.5	
Not Stated	79	17.8	
Total	444	100.0	

Note: *Nine women (2 per cent of total) in this category were in common-law unions.

Table 2: Family Court Clients by Occupational Group

Occupational Group	Number	Proportion
Professional	26	11.7
Clerical	39	17.5
Skilled Workers	39	17.5
Factory Workers	17	7.7
Domestics*	61	27.5
Casual Workers	5	2.3
Self-Employed	25	11.3
Service Workers	10	4.5
Total	222	100.0

Note: *Includes domestic helpers, cleaners, office attendants, and impact workers.

Findings

Problems reported to the Family Court were many and varied. They are summarized in Table 3. More than 44 per cent of these cases relate to affiliation matters and 28 per cent to maintenance. This indicates that non-support from fathers is the major concern, represented by more than 70 per cent of all women with problems. Custody and behavioural problems are next, each under 10 per cent; child care and marital discord follow with five per cent each.

Selected Characteristics by Types of Problems

An in-depth look was taken at problem intensity of the sample of the 444 women according to specific characteristics of age, marital status and employment.

Table 3: Type of Problem Presented to the Family Court

Type of Problem	Number	Proportion
Affiliation	197	44.4
Maintenance	123	27.7
Custody	37	8.3
Behavioural	35	7.9
Child Care	23	5.2
Marital Discord*	23	5.2
Other	6	1.4
Total	444	100.0

Note: *Nine women (2 per cent of total) in this category were in common-law unions.

As revealed in Table 4 which deals with age and problems reported, we find a significant positive correlation between age of mother and the incidence of behavioural problems displayed by children (r_s + 1 Sig at the 0.5 level). That is, the older the woman, the more likely she was to have problems with her children. Women in the age category 45 and over had the highest incidence of behavioural problems with their children.

A similar positive correlation is seen between age and marital status (r_s + 1 Sig at the 0.5 level) as 14.3 per cent of the women in the age group 45 and over disclosed marital problems, compared with 2.1 per cent in the age category 15-24.

On the other hand, there is a strong negative correlation between age and affiliation. The problem of affiliation tends to decrease with increasing age (r_s - 1 Sig at the 0.5 level).

Table 4: Family Court Clients by Age and Type of Problem

Age	Total	Affiliation		Maintenance		Custody		Behavioural		Child Care		Marital Discord		Other	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
15-24	95	71	74.7	9	9.5	6	6.3	2	2.2	5	5.3	2	2.1	-	-
25-34	193	89	46.2	57	29.5	21	10.9	11	5.7	5	2.6	9	4.6	1	.5
35-44	99	28	28.3	38	38.4	8	8.0	12	12.2	5	5.0	5	5.0	3	3.0
45+	35	3	8.6	13	37.2	0	0.0	7	20.0	5	14.3	5	14.3	2	5.7
NS	22	6	27.3	6	27.3	2	9.0	3	13.6	3	13.6	2	9.0	-	-
Total	444	197	44.4	123	27.7	37	8.3	35	7.9	23	5.2	23	5.2	6	1.4

Table 5: Family Court Clients by Marital Status and Type of Problem

Marital Status	Total	Affiliation		Maintenance		Custody		Behavioural		Child Care		Marital Discord*		Other	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Single	265	184	69.4	0	.0	33	12.5	28	10.6	19	7.2	0	0	1	.3
Married	40	2	5.0	2	5.0	4	10.0	7	17.5	2	5.0	23	57.5	-	-
Separated	135	11	8.2	117	86.7	0	0.0	0	0.0	2	1.5	0	0.0	5	3.7
Divorced	4	0	0.0	4	100.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	-	-
Total	444	197	44.4	123	27.7	37	8.3	35	7.9	23	5.2	23	5.2	6	1.4

Note: *Includes six women (1 per cent of total) in common-law unions and having discord.

No clear cut relationship appears with respect to the remaining types of problems although in the case of child care, women 45 and over represent the largest proportion with such problems. It is worthwhile to mention that women 35 years and over ranked higher than younger women with maintenance problems.

Looking at marital status and types of problems reported, Table 5 is revealing. We find that the support cases are the concern of mainly single and separated women. In a review of the records it was noted that the most frequent reason given by women with respect to the problem of non-support is that after the union breaks down, support for the child or children concerned becomes unreliable or non-existent. This problem holds even with legal unions. According to the women, men tried to link sex with support and, as one expresses it, "no sex, no support".

A similar picture bearing on the severance of parental ties can be observed with the problem of maintenance. Separated and divorced women are highly represented among maintenance matters. This is not unusual, as maintenance matters do concern the legal institution of marriage. More interesting is the fact that the only problems reported by divorced women are maintenance issues. This must,however, be interpreted with caution since only four divorced women fell in the sample.

The relationship between marital status and behavioural problems is unclear, as we would normally expect more single parents to present complaints of this type. This has not been substantiated here, as the converse is seen. Among women in the married category, 17.5 per cent reported having difficulty coping with their children's negative behaviour as compared with 10.6 per cent of single women. It does appear though that age may be the intervening variable. We stated earlier that older women reflect a tendency to experience behavioural problems with their children and these are likely to be more represented among married women.

When we look at childcare problems we see that single women reported the highest incidence.

As Table 6 shows, a range of occupational levels was extracted from the sample (the unemployed group is included). For most occupational groups, affiliation and maintenance issues are dominant. Perhaps the highlight of the table is

Table 6: Family Court Clients by Work Status and Type of Problem

Work Status	Total	Affiliation		Maintenance		Custody		Behavioural		Child Care		Marital Discord		Other	
		No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Employed*	222	88	39.6	56	25.2	27	12.2	25	11.3	5	2.3	17	7.7	4	1.8
Professional	26	8	30.8	10	38.5	5	19.2	-	0.0	-	0.0	2	7.7	1	3.9
Clerical	39	13	33.3	12	30.8	6	15.4	-	0.0	1	2.6	6	15.4	1	2.5
Skilled	39	14	35.9	13	33.3	4	10.3	7	17.9	1	2.6	-	0.0	-	-
Factory	17	10	58.8	1	5.9	3	17.6	2	11.8	-	0.0	1	5.9	-	-
Domestics	61	27	44.3	12	19.7	5	8.2	10	16.4	1	1.6	5	8.2	1	1.6
Casual Worker	5	2	40.0	-	0.0	1	20.0	1	20.0	-	0.0	-	0.0	1	20.0
Self-Employed	25	11	44.0	5	20.0	1	4.0	5	20.0	1	4.0	2	8.0	-	-
Service	10	3	30.0	3	30.0	2	20.0	-	0.0	1	10.0	1	10.0	-	-
Unemployed	132	70	53.0	30	22.7	6	4.5	7	5.3	15	11.4	2	1.5	2	1.5
Total	354	158		86		33		32		30		19		6	

*The overall total excludes 11 housewives and 79 women whose work status is unknown.

Note: Factory earnings are generally quite low and almost on par with the income of domestics. The self-employed women in the sample were not well established and would be more suitable classified as 'small scale higglers'.

Table 7: Unemployed Women by Type of Problem

Type of Problem	Number	Proportion
Affiliation	70	53.0
Maintenance	30	22.7
Custody	6	4.5
Behavioural	7	5.3
Child Care	15	11.4
Marital Discord	2	1.5
Other	2	1.5
Total	132	99.9

that factory workers (58.8 per cent), the unemployed (53.0 per cent), domestics (44.3 per cent) and the self-employed (44.0 per cent) have a majority of affiliation issues, and significantly less maintenance problems. On the other hand, this seems to be a function of marital status whereby women in lower status jobs are more likely to be unmarried and professionals more likely to be married.

Table 7 underscores further the economic situation of the unemployed group. More than half of the problems cited among unemployed women are with respect to affiliation. This is followed by maintenance with approximately 23 per cent. Another significant finding relates to the category of unemployed women and their requests for governmental child care arrangements (11.4 per cent) which were minimally disclosed by the other occupational groups of women with the exception of service workers (10 per cent). A review of the records concerning the unemployed and this problem revealed some recurring reasons, such as: "I'm 20 years, pregnant and the father of the other child has deserted since the child's birth"; "I am going through a difficult time at home as my partner curses and beats me and does not support us well". We can surmise that this

finding is linked to a possible need for these women to arrange child placement in order to seek employment which they might have been hindered from pursuing because of child care problems.

Looking again at Table 6, when a broader division into employed and unemployed is done, we observe the following. The employed request for maintenance is greater by approximately 2 per cent. Of further interest is the tendency for the employed to report more custody, behavioural and marital problems than the unemployed. What accounts for these patterns cannot be explored here, but a feasible explanation might be that working women may have less time with their children and partners mainly because of the multiple roles that they are forced to play. The problem of marital discord may also result from the women's economic independence and their inclination to assert themselves more. The same suggestion, that is economic independence, may be linked to the problem of custody as women may be in a better position to take on the responsibility of their children.

General Discussion of Findings

In an attempt to understand the patterns previously highlighted, some suggestions and generalizations will be made.

On the question of the relationship between behavioural problems and age, a possible explanation may centre around the following points. As we have observed, as the women in the sample increased in age, a greater number reported problems with their children. We can suggest that as women get older and children too get older, it becomes more difficult to control their behaviour. This may indicate a relationship problem between mother and child that reflects a 'generation gap'. Research in delinquency has shown that most children start expressing rebellious behaviour near or during the turbulent period of adolescence [Spock 26]. Sprott in his book *Human Groups* [27] also looks at the problem of juvenile delinquency. He states that methods of discipline in the family become problematic "where it is not the accepted thing for families to contain their children within their sphere of influence. They will find social satisfaction among others of the same age, and the same plight" [p.72]. Sprott also suggested that "whenever there is an adolescent 'power culture'

it will have an influence which competes with that of the home. Membership involves competition for prestige, readiness to accept the norms of the group and a readiness to enter without fear into its adventures" [p.71].

In addition to these postulations and documented causes of behavioural problems, qualitative information obtained from an in-depth interview (see Case Study No. II which follows) gives us a general picture of an interactional pattern present in a home where behavioural problems surface. We should not ignore the parent-child relationship variable where this problem is concerned.

As already stated, the figures do not imply that single parents might have a harder time coping with the discipline and control of their children than women with partners. In fact, the opposite has been found, although a recent study of juvenile delinquency done in one parish of the island, has found that children from one-parent family settings or those settings in which one parent is a step-parent are more prone to fall into delinquency [Hill 10].

On the matter of marital discord, a possible explanation for the relationship between increased age and marital discord may be linked to the scientific thesis that West Indian women begin their legal marriage career at or near middle age [R.T. Smith 25]. The main reason cited is that men have a tendency to delay the event until they are more economically stable. Nevertheless, women seeking marriage counselling reported both physical and verbal abuse from their husbands or partners, inadequate allowances, extra-marital affairs and excessive drinking on the part of the men.

The thesis concerning late marriage of West Indian women can also be enlightening as far as age and affiliation issues are concerned. As stated earlier, the problem of affiliation tends to decrease with increasing age. If we consider the above, this seems reasonable as we would expect older women to be more likely to be married and if necessary to pursue maintenance orders instead of affiliation orders. Moreover, the data do reveal that older women are inclined to request maintenance orders.

Another explanation may be linked to the age of the children and not to the status of the women. As children become older and more self-sufficient, they might be in a position to assist their mothers financially, hence decreasing the need for pursuance of support.

It can be re-emphasized that in terms of work and occupational status, the women presenting the most affiliation problems were the factory, domestic, self-employed - low paying jobs - and the unemployed category. The latter also formed the largest group for child care problems. These disclosures indicate that many women are faced with great financial stress and this stress seems to be a contributory factor where other problems are concerned.

A most significant finding was that support requests were the most common[2] spanning from ages 15 years to 50 years. The majority of women were in the 15-24 age group. When the entire sample was studied in terms of age group there was a unimodal frequency distribution with the mode in the 30-34 age group. This means that there was a steady increase in problems when women approached and reached the 30-35 age range, after which there was a decline. As Figure 1 shows, the distribution is slightly skewed.

Further research should explore the underlying forces creating family conflicts and the response of family members to these crises. The two case studies which follow attempt to do so by utilizing an in-depth qualitative method. These studies although limited in terms of the number of women interviewed, show clearly the utility of such a method for getting at complex issues on the family. The range of problems with which the women were faced gives some indication of the stresses that women in families experience.

Case Studies

The two in-depth interviews presented below highlight two of the pressing problem areas exhibited at the Family Court - child support and child delinquency.

The first case study relates to Mrs. W, 48 years old and mother of ten children, one deceased. Her union experiences have been visiting,[3] married and common-law and three partners are involved.

Mrs. W's vivid and fluent discourse informs us of some of the life experiences of women in the areas of man-woman relationships, mothering and working roles.

The second case focuses on Miss M, 25 years old, mother of six children. Three fathers are involved. Miss M presented her 11 year old son's acting out behaviour as the most pressing problem but during the interview, other stressful issues were disclosed.

Case Study I: Mrs. W

Mrs. W's initial discourse is part of a long story when she took a new and significant step - she left her common-law husband. This woman demonstrated her will to move out of a stressful situation for her own well being. This exertion of effective action was, however, disrupted when Mrs. W discovered that she was pregnant with the second child of the union concerned. Her concern about the implication of the new pregnancy forced her back into a reconciliation with her partner, a reunion that she did not really desire. So there was Mrs. W retreating from her new direction because of seemingly insurmountable barriers. This pattern has been said to be a familiar story for many women. Why did Mrs. W feel that her options were confined after she learnt about her pregnancy? Why after the birth of the child, Mrs. W displayed the strength and determination to leave when she realized that she did not want to get 'trapped' in another relationship like her marriage? We will attempt to illustrate these reasons by following the experiences of Mrs. W, but it is important to note here that the common theme throughout is centred around 'economic livelihood', 'ill-treatment', and 'limited autonomy' - components that are common to most women.

> I left my common law husband in 1971 with my child and I never had the hope that I would have another one for him, but seven months after the first one I had gotten pregnant with the second child, but I did not know at the time I left him. You see I found out that he was not a good man so I left the house but after I leave I found out that I was pregnant with the second, so I had to go back to him. Things did not improve after I went back to him. He is a man that don't pick and choose words to tell you. He would tell you that he would kick you and that he would do this and that with you. If you don't stand up to him he would do you anything. For instance, if you cook the food, share it out and put it on the table and you are dying for hunger and start to eat before him, he would pick up the food and want to hit you with it. I remember all these things why we were not living good. He is a man that drink, vomit and get on bad. After a while I stop worrying about him and when he got up some mornings and found himself on the ground after rolling off the bed, he want to fight me and curse me. He is very ignorant and he didn't want me to talk to anybody. I must lock up in the house, like how we lock up in here now talking. When I used to go to the market on Saturdays, I must not go back until the Wednesday on the street. All these things, like I can't visit my parents if he is at home.

The ill-treatment and abuse inflicted on Mrs. W by her former common-law husband demonstrate other stressful issues to which she is exposed. The experiences of physical abuse and ill-treatment are identified in our sample as pressing reasons for marital and common-law discord. Excessive drinking and extra-union affairs are seen as contributory factors.

Male domination is also blatantly evident in terms of the restrictions placed on Mrs. W. For instance, she is confined in areas like visiting her parents, shopping and eating when she sees the need.

Mrs. W continues,

> So I left him again after the child was 6 months old, and went out and rented a small room. He said that I would not get anything if I don't come back to him, but I decided my mind and said that I was not going back to him because I did not want the third child,

> so it work out alright. You see I was a married woman before and I leave my husband for the same kind of bad ways, although not quite the same. He was mean with money and he run me down three times with a machete to chop me up. The last time that happened I went to the Police and they advised me that its best to leave him. I was 31 years when I got married and I lived with my husband for nine years after that. I had seven children with him and they are all with him except for the biggest one. My first child I had at 23 years but that child is not my husband's own. I did not worry too much about that child's father after I found out that he was living with another woman. I had two children for my husband before we got married and I was also living with my parents at the time. After the second child my father say that I won't be having any more children at his house so I had to get married. Well things did not work out so it seems like it is just bad luck I catch.

Mrs. W's first three union experiences resulted in her producing ten children, one from the first union, 7 children from her marital union and 2 children from the third. Mrs. W's child-bearing history therefore consists of three sets of children. This experience in itself can result in increased conflict with partners. Case II highlights the conflict that develops between a mother and her partner when a child from another union is residing in the home. Then, as in Mrs. W's case, there is the added pressure of obtaining maintenance from the father and also the possible conflict around custody after the breakdown of the union.

Reflecting on the court proceedings, Mrs. W described the experience. Her partner had denied paternity of the first child who was registered in her married name. The issue of child registration frequently results in added pressures for both mother and child as this is sometimes pursued without serious thought. No law exists which stipulates that the child born out of wedlock must be registered in the father's name, hence some children are registered at the 'whim and fancy' of their mothers. Also worth noting is the amount of maintenance which can be ordered towards the child's upkeep. The maximum of $4.00 per week was still in effect in 1972 as the Affiliation Act, as mentioned earlier, was not amended until 1975.

So the struggle and the frustration of support pursuance for Mrs. W continued with increased conflict. Mrs. W was often forced to seek court intervention to lessen the stressful situation of obtaining the assistance from her former partner. Her story continues:

> I rented this small room and all it could hold was a bed and my sewing machine. From then on he did not want to give anything as a way of trying to make me go back to him. I then went to the Police Station and they advised me to go to the Resident Magistrate's Court - Family Court did not start then.
>
> So I took him to Court in 1972 for the two children, one 9 and the other 8 years old. On Court day he said that the first child was not his, as I had registered the child in my name. He was a builder/ contractor and the court ordered him to give $4.00 weekly for the second child. I did not bother to fight him about the one he did not own as the witness who promised to come to court and testify did not do so.[4] He had a lawyer, but I did not, so I leave it alone. I don't really worry as the little boy is getting big now. Well he continued to give the money when he feel like it so in 1977 I was forced to come to the Family Court as when I asked him for money he would say "when you carry me to the court I will give you what the Judge tell me to give you". So I took him and the Judge told him to give me $8.00 per week, but still he does not want to pay. Really, the $8.00 have no use at all and he is in a position to give at least $10.00. Sometimes when I know that he is not working, I wait until he gets work but after he gets work, he still continues to give when he feel like it. So I have to keep suing him but by the time I get that money, he again owes me back money. The last time I sued him he paid $100.00 and still owed $76.00.

Mrs. W, utterly frustrated, sought to have the allowance paid to the collecting officer: if such an order is made by the court the collecting officer will receive all payments from the father and in turn the money will be forwarded to the mother. If payments by the father are in arrears after two weeks, the court may issue a warrant of distress in order to obtain the arrears. Some mothers find this procedure quite helpful.

Mrs. W demonstrated her frustration and distress when she said,

> I am really tired of coming here so many times with this man. He himself say that he is tired of the Court House, yet he has seventy two dollars for me and by now it is a hundred and odd dollars. He does construction for Government and all over the place, so I tell the Court to let him pay the money to the collecting officer, and when he does not pay, they can take a warrant out for him. That's the only way I can handle it. You know I prefer to know that I have to walk from home to come down here to get the money than to have to hassle with him every month. Maybe this way things might be better. It is not that I want to do it but the man don't want to give the child anything. During the case he was telling the Judge that he wanted the child, but I told the Judge that he had no one to look after her because nobody would live with him as he is not a nice man.

Mrs. W's search for work is seen as a major priority at this time. She's relatively skilled (dressmaking) and is capable of commanding a fair income. She seems to want to live a more independent life in preference to the financial security partly offered through her visiting partner. It appears that a pressing problem for Mrs. w is her inability to obtain secure employment - a major problem for a large percentage of the women represented in this paper. This issue has serious implications for women as without the tools that will allow independence, they would have no recourse but to be dependent on a male partner. At this point in her life, at 48 years, Mrs. W has more insight about herself and her present situation. According to her, most women because of the pressures they face do not think beyond the immediate task of sustaining life. She continued:

> Right now I have somebody that visits me but when I look on my life I don't feel that it is the life I wanted, its just that I couldn't do better. This one helps me and he gives me $50-70 each month and with that, I also do a little sewing for myself. It's hard nowadays and I really need help with the rent. You know, if I had a work I won't worry with a man, they are too much trouble. For instance, when my friend come he might say 'leave some dinner for me tonight' and you know I would not behold him until days later. It is really because I can't do better, because it would not suit me to go here one night and there another night, I won't have no use then. If I really get a job, something to do, I would be happy.

Case Study II: Miss M

Miss M in her role as mother-socializing agent is having great difficulty coping with her 11-year-old son's impulses. Added to this, she is worried that neighbours are recognizing her inability to 'manage him' - another common pressure faced by mothers. Bobby's father is not in the picture and this seems to have seriously affected him. Also conflict has developed between Bobby and his step-father. As research has indicated, where one parent is a step-parent, parent-child discord is more prevalent.

Another point of interest is Miss M's feeling of disappointment in her relationship with her partner. She appears to be wrapped up in satisfying her own needs, therefore it is possible that because of her other pressing problems, Bobby's needs became secondary.

Let us now take a look at the mother during her description of her child's behaviour and her own experiences.

> I cannot handle my eleven year old son, Bobby, and he is really upsetting my life. He is not going to school regularly, he is very cruel, has a bad temper and is always fighting. For instance, on Friday I sent him to the shop and because he did not want to go, he took a toy truck a little boy had in the yard and then hit him with a stick in his head.
>
> When I talk to him he don't hear me and if I take something and fling after him he would return it back and lick me with it. This cause people in the yard to say that I can't manage him as he do all these things. Up to the other day he fling a bottle and chop a lady over her head. He won't go to school, like say go this week, the other week he say that he is not going.
>
> His father has gone away from the time that he is 3 years. The Sunday before he went away he came by with some sweeties and $10.00 but since then he don't write. All the time he says that he does not know his father. He used to go by where his father family live as it was not far away but now he does not talk about him. The problem with Bobby started from him small as from then he had a wicked intention into him. When he was little over three years old he tell me that me is the first one he going to kill and then his father. He said that he didn't like me and when I

> asked him why he just say that him didn't like me. Even from the time he was two years, the lady I used to leave him with had problems with him and had to beat him all day and even now if the other children do him anything or touch anything of his, he would pick up something and lick it into their head.
>
> I went to live with my children's father and I took him with us. The man I live with used to treat him good at first but he say now that he has no manners and I must get him put somewhere. He really used to treat him good but now since him getting big and rude, he don't have as much love for him as he used to have before. Like he used to buy things for all the children but he don't bother with that again. It now come in like my children father don't care because he said that I must get him into a school where he can stay as he has no manners.

Family literature emphasizes the strong bond between mother and daughter not only through childhood but usually throughout adult life. Miss M's mother seems to have been supportive of her since the birth of Bobby when Miss M was 14 years old. Miss M's mother nurtured Bobby and continued in this role for a few years. After Miss M left her common-law husband, she again sought her mother's security during the stressful period of the separation. During the brief separation Miss M got involved with someone else partly because of her financial insecurity - a common problem faced by many women resulting from unemployment and underemployment and limited education. She was no longer on a family planning method as it affected her health and she got pregnant.[5] She was forced to go back to her common-law husband as she had no other option and secondly, she had a new baby to care for. The new father is not cooperating but she is unwilling to seek child support through the court. She is hoping that the father will make a positive change in order to avoid court intervention as many women fear the negative consequences of increased conflict between mother, father and child.

Miss M continues her story:

> You see this last baby here (six-month-old baby present) is not the man I live with own. We had left for awhile and I went to live with my mother. I left the house because the children's father told me to leave. One night him come in and he put his arms around me but I

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

was tired as I just come back from going out to buy something. So I said "Cho you don't know when people tired", so that made him start to fight me and he tell me to come out his house. You see he wanted to say that I had someone so he said "What you do so to make you tired? You just come in" and he started to lick me. So he said I must come out so the next day I come out with Bobby and go to where my mother is and left the four other children with him.

While at my mother, I get fall with this child as I started to talk to another man who live in the same yard as my children's father. This baby's father had promised to rent a room for us but wherever my mother found a room for us, he would then say that he can't pay the rent that it is too high. My mother kept saying that she can't keep Bobby there as he won't behave himself and he also handle me badly too and tell me plenty things towards this baby father: he say that the man don't mean me no good and him taking me and make one idiot because all the while him say he looking room and he don't look room. As I said he live in the same yard that my second baby father live and we get in contact since I leave from there as he follow me here where my mother is. I suppose that I got involved through I was not working and you know when they see you they tell you things, like they would help you and things like that. I get in with him but I did not know that I would get pregnant although I was not on family planning. I used to take it at one point but I did stop off through it was not agreeing with me, so from the time that I lived with the children's father he told me not to take anymore since the complain I get from it.

So because of the pregnancy I had to go back to where I lived at the lady where my mother live, quarrel about water and things and also the little boy won't hear. I don't feel so good about going back to the children father but since four of them there and one already broke his shoulder I decided to stay and the father in a way wanted me to stay too: before I went back I used to go and wash for them as they wasn't getting any care. So the day he saw me at the hospital with the little boy who broke his shoulder, he told me to sleep over and stay with the little boy and I did.

> Now the present baby father had told me not to have contact with the children's father so when he found out that I stayed over, he said that he don't business with me again so he don't give the baby anything since him born. Right through the pregnancy he never give me anything only a tin of feed when the baby born: he don't feel good to see me come back here and the one I have the four children for don't feel good either since the two of them live in the same yard. This present baby father know that he is the father of the child, up to today, he said that but he don't give him nothing yet: I don't want to take him to court so I would watch him first to see what he is going to do.

Like Mrs. W, Miss M is striving for some form of independence and her major goal is to obtain secure employment. However, most of the strengths identified in Mrs. W seem to be lacking in Miss M, a younger woman, who seems to be overpowered by her problems. Her main buffer - her mother - seems not to be as cooperative as previously. Throughout, a sense of hopelessness is implied in Miss M's conversation. Though she displays some fighting spirit as far as trying to obtain some income is concerned, she remains frustrated and unable to cope with her many pressing problems. Bobby's behaviour is seen as the most disturbing thing to her and we can assume that as long as Miss M is a part of so many stressful experiences, Bobby will be labeled as the 'trouble-maker'.

> Right now I really would like to get a job but I don't have much education. I was at a shoe factory but when the boss found out about the pregnancy as I used to stop stop as I was sick, the man tell me to come back after the baby born. I have not gone back yet to see about the job as the baby was taking the breast.
>
> Since I have the baby the children's father don't like to give me money again as he feel I would use it on this new baby. I get food but when I want money to buy anything he's not going to give me. I make a little money by caring for an old man in the yard who can't walk. I look after his breakfast and dinner and when he gets money from his daughter, he would give me a twenty dollar or so.

> This money I use to buy feed and cereal for the baby. Right now I don't really know if I want to stay with the children's father as I am out to live by myself and go back to the work I used to do. Since I came back, my mother has also sent back Bobby as she say that she can't keep him there. She felt that he gets on too bad so she sent him back. Now he is giving me bare trouble. Now that he is back he is putting up the children's father against me by interfering with his tools. Bobby would not leave the man things. He take out his hammer and saw to make pigeon cob and have it out for other people to take. This causes him to quarrel with him. Then he needs to get a reading book and I can't afford to buy the reading book. Then he is rude and have no manners. I really can't manage him.

A range of stressful experiences were identified throughout the discourses with Mrs. W and Miss M. Major issues centred around financial stress - lack of necessary skills to earn a livelihood, or inability to obtain employment and domestic pressures surrounding child care, mothering and union conflict. The studies therefore imply that women are undergoing tremendous pressures. If they are the true representation of most women, then we can say that, at present, women have not acquired to any significant degree economic and social power and authority.

Summary

Our data focused on a number of women who seek the services of the Family Court in order to get maintenance for their children. For the year 1978, three-fifths of all cases going through the judiciary process were for affiliation matters, followed by maintenance, criminal charges, custody and care and protection [Cumper 6]. If the court procedure fails to bring the necessary support, which it does in some cases, then mothers will be forced to pursue other problem-solving avenues. Some of these still fall within the legal framework, others, like abandonment, become both a legal and a social problem.

Quite often the children of stressful family situations become defined by the legal terminology 'children in trouble', as a result of which they face the Juvenile Courts. As such they become victims of a situation for the creation of which they are not responsible. Cumper [6] has urged that preventive work should be a part of the statutory duties of officers of child care and protection and probation services. As the law stands today, preventive work is not a part of the statutory duty of either the juveniles law or the probation of offenders law which deal specifically with 'children in trouble'. A great deal of this work therefore falls to the voluntary services for children. Voluntary services provided two-thirds of the places for children who because of family break-downs and other reasons, have to be placed in homes. There are 58 places of safety/children's homes in the island, including both government and non-government. The 1978 figures show that over 2,500 children are located in these homes.

Two non-government organizations of early date have been organized into one powerful and very effective organization - VOUCH (Voluntary Organization for the Upliftment of Children). This organization aims at achieving greater coordination and cooperation in services to families with children 0-12 years, so as to provide a more comprehensive delivery of services. In a recent study of two children's homes run by voluntary agencies it was found that broken homes, abandonment, mental illness and poverty were the four most important reasons resulting in the placement of children in these homes. It was further found that more than 70 per cent of the cases were sent to the home through the instrumentality of the Family Court. The second most important source of referral

is the dire poverty of the children [Jonas 18].

There is no doubt that the plight of families is the plight of children and vice versa. Further, there is no doubt that women, because of their close ties with children, experience a great deal of stressful consequences of family conflicts. Preventive measures focusing on the problems of children must also of necessity focus on the problems of women. One area in which the Jamaican government has shown increasing interest is in the provision of day care services for children. However, there are an estimated 300,000 children under 4 years of age potentially needing day care services. At present, there are 21 government day care centres. This is grossly inadequate as it has been estimated that less than 1 per cent of the infants and children receive services, private or public. Government's latest effort is in the direction of upgrading and recognizing 'backyard nurseries', a traditional service that has been contributing to day care needs for a long time [13].

The Family Court is undoubtedly one of the most important support mechanisms available to women in Jamaica. The policy initiative with respect to the maintenance and affiliation acts display some amount of governmental sensitivity to women and their children. Some of the implieations which, for example, the Status of Children Act have for the status of women are still unclear. Further research needs to be done in expanding the issues raised in this paper as well as exploring in more detail the implications of the new legislation for women.

Footnotes

1. It is worth noting that the Affiliation Act was passed in 1926, 45 years after the Maintenance Act which was passed in 1881.

2. Why do fathers display resistance regarding the maintenance of their children? Inez Morrison, coordinator of the Family Court says, "It is economics ... if a man earns $50 per week and has three baby mothers with 12 children, it is impossible to support all of them". Others in the field have pinpointed the problem as the irresponsibility of fathers, stemming partly from the lack of interest of these men. It is felt that some fathers are not close to their children which results in a lack of feeling of loyalty and obligation to their offspring. See article by Jennifer French on The Family Court in *Sunday Gleaner*, 18 October 1981.

3. Visiting Union: where a woman has a partner with whom she maintains a sexual relationship but who is not living in the same household.

4. In the event that a father denies paternity, a mother is requested to bring forward a witness who would testify to the effect that the couple were in contact with each other around the time of conception.

5. Powell in her study of family planning dropouts [21] showed that 45 per cent of the women who discontinued attendance at the family planning clinic, stopped using a method because of health related reasons. As can be seen from Miss M's case, discontinuance can result in serious consequences, namely, an unwanted pregnancy which usually brings about increased stress and strain.

References

[1] BLAKE, Judith, *Family Structure in Jamaica*, New York: The Free Press, 1961.

[2] BRODBER, Erna, *Abandonment of Children in Jamaica*, Mona: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1974.

[3] BUVINIC, Mayra, YOUSSEF, Nadia and VON ELM, Barbara, *Women Headed Households: The Ignored Factor in Development Planning*, Washington D.C.: International Centre for Research on Women, 1978.

[4] CLARKE, Edith, *My Mother Who Fathered Me*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1957.

[5] CUMPER, Gloria, *Survey of Social Legislation in Jamaica*, Mona: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1972.

[6] _____ and DALEY, Stephanie, *Family Law in the Commonwealth Caribbean*, Mona: Department of Extra Mural Studies, UWI, 1979.

[7] DENHAM, Carole-Gene, "Profile on Three Government Places of Safety in the Corporate Area", Unpublished Social Work Paper, Department of Sociology, Mona: UWI, 1979.

[8] GERBER, S.N. (ed.) *The Family in the Caribbean*, Proceedings of the First Conference on the Family in the Caribbean, 1968, Rio Piedras: University of Puerto Rico, Institute of Caribbean Studies, 1971.

[9] GOODE, William J., *The Family*, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1964.

[10] HILL, Emoricia V., "The Psycho-Social-Economic Factors of Juvenile Delinquency as Related to Court Orders", Unpublished Social Work paper, Department of Sociology, Mona: UWI, 1978.

[11] HOLLIS, Florence, *Case Work - A Psycho Social Therapy*, New York: Random House, 1972.

[12] JAMAICA, *Economic and Social Survey 1978*, National Planning Agency, Ministry of Finance and Planning.

[13] JAMAICA, *Five Year Development Plan 1978-1982*, National Planning Agency, Ministry of Finance and Planning.

[14] _____, Laws of, Vol. IX-M The Judicature (Family Court Act) 18 December 1975, Acts 41 of 1975, 22 of 1978.

[15] _____, Vol. XII, The Maintenance Act, 31 March 1881.

[16] _____, Vol. 1-A, Revised edition, Affiliation Act, 26 April 1926.

[17] _____, The Acts of Jamaica 1976, Status of Children Act 1976, (Act 36 of 1976).

[18] JONAS, Joycelyn C., "A Comparative Study of Two Children's Homes in a Rural and Urban Setting, Operated by a Voluntary Organization", Unpublished Social Work Paper, Department of Sociology, Mona: UWI, 1978.

[19] MILLER, Jean Baker, *Toward a New Psychology of Women*, Penguin Books, 1978.

[20] PARAD, Howard J., *Crisis Intervention*, New York: Family Service Association of America, 1967.

[21] POWELL, D.L., "Family Planning Dropout Study" for the National Family Planning Board, Jamaica, (mimeo.) 1979.

[22] REID, Asquith, "The Abandonment of Children in Kingston and St. Andrew 1974-1977", Unpublished Paper, Department of Sociology, Mona: UWI, 1978.

[23] ROBERTS, G.W. and SINCLAIR, Sonja A., *Women in Jamaica: Patterns of Reproduction*, New York: KTO Press, 1978.

[24] SMITH, M.G., *West Indian Family Structure*, Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1962.

[25] SMITH, Raymond T., *The Negro Family in British Guiana*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956.

[26] SPOCK, P., *Raising Children in a Difficult Time*, New York: Norton and Company, 1974.

[27] SPROTT, W.J.H., *Human Groups*, Penguin Books, 1971.

[28] WHITE, Blossom, "Some Factors Contributing to the Holding Together of Marriages for over Seven Years in the Corporate Area", Unpublished Social Work Paper, Department of Sociology, Mona:UWI, 1978.

JOYCELIN MASSIAH

WOMEN WHO HEAD HOUSEHOLDS[1]

Recent evidence from censal and survey data dealing with the position of women in different societies has pointed to the growing incidence of female-headed households, particularly in developing countries [Newland 37]. This increase appears to be closely correlated with processes of modernization arising from specific forms of economic development strategies. One recent report provides striking evidence of the negative effect of such strategies on women in general, and those who head households in particular [Buvinić et al. 9]. That report, which is based on aggregate census data, contains a significant section on the Commonwealth Caribbean using material from the 1970 population census supplemented by an overview of some of the anthropological literature on the Caribbean family. According to the report, the Caribbean data provide "compelling evidence of the disadvantaged position of women who are heads of households as compared both to the female population in general, and to the population of men who are household heads, in particular" [p.ii].

Without attempting to initiate a lengthy discussion on the origins of this phenomenon, we feel that it is important to note that this has been a feature of West Indian family life from the earliest days of its history. Under the slave regime, the basic elements necessary to the sharing and maintenance of a common household by a legally married couple, were unavailable to the slaves. Christian marriage was incompatible with the slave code, either partner being at risk of being removed or sold at any time. The child of a slave woman derived status from its mother's legal status, thus automatically becoming the property of its mother's owner. Efforts at stimulating reproduction often took the form of special dispensations to the mother and to the plantation overseers or managers but never to the fathers. Such practices had the effect of giving legitimacy to the centrality of the mother's role, a notion which was firmly entrenched in the kin systems of the West African tribes transported to the New World.

Recent data suggest that such practices did not necessarily serve to introduce and perpetuate the notion of male marginality. Using data for Jamaica, Trinidad-Tobago and Barbados, Higman [22] has demonstrated that young slave women tended to live either in a childless co-residential union or in an extended family household group. During the prime reproductive years, the majority of slave women lived with a mate and their children. After their children set up independent households, the woman reverted to living only with her mate or, if he died, with her children in some version of the extended family. Available evidence of slave mortality patterns suggests that with an expectation of life of only 23 years towards the end of slavery [Roberts 41], large numbers of women surviving to establish 'grandmother' households could hardly be expected. Higman's data indicate that household units consisting of a woman and her children ranged from 14 per cent in Jamaica to 29 per cent in Trinidad-Tobago. This suggests that the incidence of women-headed households was firmly established during slavery, but was perhaps not as extensive as conventional wisdom would have us believe.[2]

The second set of factors which may be said to have contributed to the existence of female-headed households in the region is that related to migration. In other societies migration has also been cited as an important contributory factor, but the emphasis is on internal migration. In the Caribbean, although rural-urban migration is undoubtedly important, the more crucial type from the perspective of this study is external migration. This has been a feature of Caribbean society from the earliest days of its history, assuming particular prominence from about the third quarter of the 19th century. Indeed, except for the short period from the late 1920s to the early 1940s, the past hundred years or so have witnessed a steady exodus from the region, the direction and volume of the movement changing as people's perceptions of available opportunities changed.

It may be said that an emigration ethic has become an integral aspect of the culture, in the sense that emigration is now accepted as a valid life option. Until recently, this has been an essentially male phenomenon which has had significant implications for the female population. Successive migration streams attracted ever larger numbers of males, thereby producing marked imbalances between the sexes within the productive and reproductive ages. In Barbados, for example, the sex

ratio for this group moved from 715 in 1891 to 526 in 1921, i.e. during a period marked by heavy sex selective emigration. Between 1921 and 1946, the male deficit in the population was considerably reduced, the sex ratio rising to 845, during this period of minimal migration. A resurgence of emigration during the decade of the 1950s produced declines in the sex ratio which by 1960 stood at 809. After 1960 the trend was again reversed and a rise to 903 in the sex ratio of this age group resulted. This feature is particularly interesting since emigration during this latter period involved considerable numbers of females, thus contributing to a decline in the traditional balance of the sex ratio in favour of the females. For the period as a whole, continued deficit of males in this crucial age range meant that significant numbers of females were required to manage their households single-handedly. It may be argued that it was during this period that the phenomenon of female household heads took firm root in the region.

Another series of reasons given for the incidence of female-headed households in the region, centres on notions of increased female independence as socio-economic conditions improve. One manifestation of this independence is to be found in the adoption of the non-residential sexual union as a socially acceptable option rather than a deviant alternative. One recent study in which the characteristics of women in visiting unions were explored concludes:[3]

> ...A careful consideration of views of respondents points definitely to their position that this form of family accords them a degree of freedom and independence which they hold to be greatly to their advantage. Even from the standpoint of the support of their children and the family as a whole, they maintain that the absence of the partner is by no means a disaster. For economically they do not consider their position unduly difficult; such financial assistance as they receive from their partners has not to be spent in partial support of the latter, as would be the case in residential unions. Such funds serve solely for their own support and for the upkeep of their children [Roberts and Sinclair 43 p.249].

In effect, the respondents in the Jamaica study stress clear advantages to being in the visiting union - by extension, to managing their own households. These

include the assurance of freedom and a measure of independence, qualities which appear to be highly valued.

Reference to the high incidence of female household headship in the region has been made in much of the extensive literature on lower income black families in the Caribbean, a great deal of which concerns itself with the notion of matrifocality.[4] It is not proposed to enter the controversy about what constitutes 'matrifocality' and 'female-headed households'. Matrifocality is here used to describe a concept denoting that the role of the mother is structurally, culturally and effectively centred [Tanner 52]. Female-headed households is here used to describe a wide range of domestic arrangements typified mainly by the absence of an adult male in the relation of spouse or partner of the dominant female and in which the basic structural principle is the conjugal link between members. Such households may be two or three generational units, being analogous to what Laslett defines as *'simple family households'* or *'extended family households'* respectively [27, p.29-30]. The important distinguishing feature is that the dominant female not only assumes responsibility for the affairs of a household consisting of herself, her children and/or her grandchildren, but also her position as head of the household is recognized and admitted as such by all household members.

Some writers use demographic arguments to account for the reportedly high incidence of such households in the Caribbean - the greater the surplus of females, the higher the proportion of female household heads [Otterbein 39]. Others use economic arguments: where a high proportion of males are unable to obtain jobs at wage levels which permit the maintenance of household groups, females appear as household heads [Greenfield 19]. One of the earliest works on West Indian family structure [Smith 47], however, stresses the importance of viewing this phenomenon within the context of the woman's life cycle. Smith attributes the incidence to economic insecurity and the marginality of low-income groups to the general economic system.

Despite the fact that the literature suggests that female household headship has been a characteristic feature of lower income family life, no attention seems to have been given to the study of this particular form of household arrangement from the perspective of the woman. The present paper is concerned not with the determinants of female-headed households but with an elaboration of the characteristics of females who head

households, the problems which they face and the strategies which they develop to cope with their circumstances. Three sources of data are used. The 1970 Population Census is used to develop a demographic profile of women. Data from a small pilot study concerned with the Role of Women in the Caribbean are used to demonstrate the kinds of problems and the survival strategies adopted by these women in three territories - Barbados, Jamaica, Trinidad-Tobago.[5] Finally, data from national assistance records from one territory, Barbados, are used to demonstrate one type of governmental response to the plight of the poorest of these women. Policy implications are discussed in the final section of the paper.

A Question of Definition

It is useful to examine the various forms which female-headed households may take. In Western societies, women who head households are usually categorized in terms of their marital status and are therefore identified as being either widowed, divorced or separated. Widowhood is not regarded as being an important contributor to female households. The crucial factor is often cited as marital instability. According to Sawhill [45], in the United States of America increasing economic opportunities for women outside of marriage and changing attitudes towards women's roles in society have resulted in women opting either out of an unsatisfactory marriage or not to marry at all.

Indications that this trend may be imminent in the Caribbean are evident for Barbados where between 1948-1975, the annual number of divorce petitions and the number of decrees granted have more than tripled, while the annual number of marriages has increased by only one-fifth. Simultaneously the divorce rate increased from 1.4 per 100 marriages in 1948 to 6.2 in 1960 and 12.9 by 1975. An interesting sidelight on these figures is that up to the 1960s the number of divorce petitions presented by husbands exceeded that presented by wives. However by the 1970s, this position was completely reversed so that by 1975 wives presented more than twice the number of petitions presented by husbands [Forde 16]. Without similar evidence from other parts of the region, a case for increases in marital instability cannot be clearly made. Indeed, census data indicate that among female households a mere 2 per cent may be categorized as divorced or legally separated.[6]

A much more important category in the Caribbean is the widowed group which accounted for proportions ranging from 34.1 per cent (Guyana) to 11.4 per cent (St. Vincent) of females who head households in the region. In societies

in which life expectancy is continually increasing and continually in favour of females and where the difference between the mean age of spouses at marriage is no greater than five years, a tendency towards high numbers of widowed females would be expected. In Jamaica, for example, male life expectancy increased from 35.9 in 1921 to 62.2 in 1960, while female life expectancy moved from 38.2 to 66.3 over the same period. In 1960, the average age at marriage for Jamaican females aged 15-49 was 30.9 years and that for males aged 15-59 was 35.2 years. If a woman aged 15 years marries a man five years her senior the probability that he will survive until she attains age 50 is 0.88, whereas the probability that she will survive until he attains age 50 is 0.93. In short, women are more likely than men to outlive their spouses. Further, as in many societies, despite the absence of specific cultural taboos against widow remarriage or of specific institutional support for widows, there is nevertheless a marked tendency towards a low remarriage rate of widowed women. Such women are therefore forced to maintain separate households for themselves and their children.

In the Caribbean, the majority of women who head households have never been married, but have been in a male/female union of some kind previously. In some forms of the female-headed household there may be a resident male in the husband/partner relationship but he is unable to function as the household head for health or economic reasons. In such cases the male's inability to sustain his economic role effectively results in the deterioration of his status within the household. A female-headed household then develops with the woman retaining control over such income and assets as she may have, and over her children.

Whether a male partner is absent or not, it is important to recognize that female-headed households need not include children, although those involving children predominate. The point is important in a region in which mortality levels and patterns are closely approaching those prevailing in the developed world. Women are therefore enjoying a greater longevity and a considerable number of older women are electing to live alone or as solitaires, to use Laslett's terminology, a feature which contains specific implications for social welfare.

The question of what constitutes a female-headed household is integrally linked with the particular

definitions adopted for the concepts 'household' and 'head of household'. Following recommended UN procedures, the three most recent censuses of the Commonwealth Caribbean devised the following definitions:

> *A Private Household* is defined as one or more persons voluntarily living together and sharing at least one daily meal. In general, a household comprises a father, mother, children, other relatives, as well as other persons sharing in their household arrangements [53].
>
> ...It is important to note, however, that a member of the household is not necessarily a member of the family, nor will all members of the family be members of the household. It is also important to note that a household may include more than one family [53].

A clear distinction is therefore made between *household* which is construed in terms of domestic arrangements, and *family* which is defined in terms of kin relationships. It is an important distinction which tends to be obscured in the current literature on female-headed households.

Another definition worthy of repetition is that relating to the term *head of household*, which for the recent regional censuses has been:

> The head of the household is generally the person who is responsible for the upkeep and maintenance of the household - usually the husband or common-law husband. Where the husband or common-law husband is not the head, or where no man lives in the household, *the person who claims the position* (emphasis mine) or who is so regarded by other members of the household is treated as head [53].[7]

This approach served three basic purposes in the recent censuses in the region. Initially, it provided the census enumerator with a focal point for the collection of information from the household, i.e. the head of the household could invariably provide most of the required information for all household members. Secondly, the characteristics of the household are linked to the person designated as head. This facilitates cross tabulations of household features with demographic and social characteristics of the person who is head. Thirdly, the last two censuses used the head of household schedule for the collection of information on household amenities

and characteristics of the dwelling unit. While these data were not tabulated according to head of household, the procedure permitted the conduct of a simultaneous population and housing census - a considerable economic saving.

Despite these obvious advantages, it is evident that by leaving the matter to be settled by the respondent, rather than instructing the enumerator to categorize on the basis of a specific criterion - presumably responsibility for upkeep and maintenance of the household - a distinct cultural bias is introduced into the data. In the Caribbean where matrifocality of the family is stressed but male authoritarianism is the ideal, there may well be a tendency to overstate male headship. By contrast, where the allocation relies on the 'person who claims the position', it becomes possible for a woman to cite herself, in the absence of her husband/partner at the time of enumeration. Whether either of these biases is sufficient to offset the other is impossible to tell. However, in a region in which women have traditionally assumed important roles, data on household heads by sex are regarded as important inputs into national social planning. Thus, in contrast to other regions, e.g. the countries of the Economic Commission for Europe which have opted to discontinue the compilation of tabulations based on the characteristics of the household head, the thrust in the Caribbean is for a more reliable and a wider range of such tabulations.

Whatever our dissatisfactions with the available census definitions, it must be remembered that an enumeration exercise dealing with thousands or millions of persons cannot realistically be expected to treat with the many refinements of conceptualization which we would wish. Further, little methodological research has been conducted with a view to devising viable alternatives to the head of household concept. Where it has, the experience has been that results differ little from previous censuses which adopted the head of household approach. This has been the experience, e.g. of the 1980 United States Population and Housing Census which adopted the notion of 'reference person', defined as the "person in whose name the home is owned or rented" [United Nations 54]. In effect, all the census data can offer are gross indicators of headship, however defined. More precise indicators must rely on micro-level data. At that level, it becomes possible to treat with such issues as the diversity of household structures, the determinants of different types, the nature and allocation of authority

within different types and the linkage between differential household types and the politico-economic structures in which they are embedded.

Demographic Profile of the Female-Headed Household in the Caribbean

Data from the 1970 Census permit, for the first time, a detailed comparative analysis of the characteristics of household heads. Published summary tables on the non-institutional population adopt sex of head as a control variable separately cross tabulated by age, educational attainment, marital status, main activity, occupational group and annual income. One tabulation shows female household heads by union status. Some of the tabulations are three-way tables showing the relevant variable, size of household and number of rooms, others are two-way tables showing the relevant variable and type of dwelling. All tabulations are presented separately by sex of head. Virtually all of the tabulations are presented at national level, but a few disaggregate at the major division level (i.e. well defined geographical/administrative units) and others at the major and minor division (i.e. sub-divisions within each major division) level but none appear at the enumeration district (ED) level. The only marginally comparable material from an earlier census was in 1960 when an ED table on number of families by size and sex of head of family was published. The task of reconstructing family units proved too formidable to be repeated in 1970 and 1980, hence the focus on head of household data. At least two studies have made use of some of the 1970 household data [Buvinic 9, Massiah 30].[8] The present paper attempts to take both of those studies a step further.

For the region as a whole, Table 1 shows that about 32 per cent of household heads are female with highest proportions recorded for St. Kitts (47 per cent) and lowest for Guyana (22 per cent). Of the 14 territories, eight record proportions in excess of 40 per cent, and three record proportions of 25 per cent and less. In general, countries with a significantly large black population are those recording a high proportion of female-headed households while the converse holds for countries with significant proportions of East Indians (Trinidad, Guyana) or native Indians (Belize). One territory, British Virgin Islands, which is known to have a very high rate of migration affecting both sexes, also reflects relatively low proportions.

The median age for household heads of both sexes is well over 40 years for all territories, with females reflecting consistently higher median ages than males in all but two cases. Indeed in two territories - Guyana and the Caymans - the median age for females amounts to about eight years higher than that for males. Much of this can probably be explained in terms of the prevailing pattern of mortality in which females survive males at the higher end of the age range. In fact, well over one-third of female single person households consist of women over 65 years of age. Indeed, in the Turks Islands the proportion rises to as high as 54 per cent.

Male and female household heads in the Caribbean maintain households of approximately similar size. In general, male-headed households tend to be somewhat larger than females, the average for the 14 territories being 4.8 for males and 4.0 for females. Highest household sizes are recorded at 5.7 for males in Guyana and 4.9 for females in St. Vincent. Lowest for both sexes are evident in Montserrat where the value for males is 3.5 and for females 3.4 This is considerably higher than the comparable proportions for males among whom the range is from 16 to 25 per cent, with a regional average of 20 per cent.

Approximately one-quarter of all male household heads in the Caribbean have never been married. This proportion ranges from a high 45.4 per cent in Jamaica to a low 10.7 per cent in the Caymans. By contrast, Table 2 shows that almost 50 per cent of female household heads have never been married, ranging from a high 67.3 per cent in St. Vincent to a low 29.8 per cent in Guyana. Differences between male and female proportions are relatively large, amounting to as high as 30 percentage points in the case of Montserrat, with the lowest difference being 12.2 percentage points recorded for Trinidad-Tobago.

Caribbean censuses have distinguished between marital status, defined in legal terms, and union status, indicative of the type of relationship existing either at the time of the census in the case of women under age 45, or at age 45 in the case of women 45 years and older. Three types of union are recognized - *married*, involving legal sanction and co-residence, *common-law*, involving co-residence only, and *visiting*, indicative of the birth of a child during the year preceding the census although the woman was not in a married or common-law union at the time of the census. Those women who were not in a union at census time or at age 45, were subdivided into those

no longer living with husband, those no longer living with common-law partner and those who have never had a husband or common-law partner. It is felt that this approach speaks more precisely to the woman's actual union involvement than the marital status approach.

On the basis of this approach, Table 3 indicates that in the Caribbean 32.9 per cent of all female heads of household were in married unions in 1970, the largest proportion so recorded. They are followed, in order of numerical importance, by women not living with their husbands (21.6 per cent), by women not living with their common-law partners (19.9 per cent) and by women in common-law unions (14.8 per cent). A long way behind come women in visiting unions (4.8 per cent) and women who never had a common-law partner or husband (1.5 per cent).[9] Territorial variations are wide but this general ordering is maintained throughout the region.

There is nothing in the data to indicate the extent to which women in various union types are dependent on their own or their partners' financial resources for their livelihood. According to the census definition, the title head of household indicates that the household depends on the person so recognized to conduct its affairs, including its economic affairs. Thus, the type of union in which female household heads are involved indicates the possible existence of a supplementary or an alternative source of income to the household. In terms of the given union designations, over half of the women in these households are without such supplementary income originating from the presence of a male in the household.

Unfortunately, union status data cross-classified with main activity and sex of head are not available at the regional level. However, unpublished data for Barbados [Massiah 31] reveal a high degree of correlation between union status of female and household heads and worker rates of the total female working population according to union status (Spearman's rho = +0.9). This would seem to imply that women without a resident partner reflect higher worker rates than women with a resident partner.

The degree to which household heads may be expected to discharge their responsibilities may be demonstrated by reference to their level of educational attainment, their involvement in paid employment and their involvement in non-agricultural occupations. It is instructive to examine these characteristics.

Education

Male household heads tend to be better educated than their female counterparts, in that more males tend to proceed to a secondary and university level of education than females, but the differences between the sexes are marginal. According to Table 4, 85.7 per cent of male household heads in the region and 88.3 per cent of female household heads have attained a level no higher than primary. Among males this range extends from a high 92.5 per cent in St. Lucia to a low 36.5 per cent in Barbados. Among females the range is from 96.8 per cent in St. Vincent to 47.5 per cent in Barbados. Differences between males and females at this level range from 16.8 percentage points in the Cayman Islands to 1.2 percentage points in Jamaica in favour of the males. In every territory, it is the females who show higher percentages terminating their education at the primary level. Even in Barbados, which portrays the most favourable education position, the difference is as much as 11 percentage points in favour of the males.

At the secondary level, not much difference is evident. For the 14 territories, 9.5 per cent of the male household heads and 8.6 per cent of the female household heads have achieved a secondary level of education. At this level, there is much wider territorial variation. Among male household heads, 58.9 per cent attained a secondary level of education in Barbados as compared with 3.3 per cent in St. Lucia. Among females, the range is between 51.0 per cent in Barbados and 1.9 per cent in St. Lucia and Montserrat. If educational attainment relates to ability to discharge responsibility, it would therefore seem that household heads in Barbados, both male and female, are best equipped in the region to discharge their household affairs.

For the region as a whole, only 2.4 per cent of male household heads and 0.6 per cent of female household heads have achieved a university level of education. Of particular interest is the position of the four largest territories. Barbados shows the highest proportion of its male household heads with diplomas and degrees (3.6 per cent) while the second highest is Trinidad with 3.0 per cent. Among female household heads it is Trinidad which shows the highest proportion with diplomas and degrees (1.1 per cent), while Jamaica is second with 1.0 per cent. Lowest in both cases is Guyana. Among the smaller territories the proportion of female household heads with a university education is consistently less

than 1 per cent, except in those territories known to have significant numbers of foreign born residents, many of whom tend to be professionals.

Employment

It is not proposed to engage in the current debate on the validity of census definitions for permitting an adequate understanding of the meaning of work in the lives of women. Dissatisfaction has been amply affirmed in the vast literature on women in development. It is simply proposed to accept that limitations do exist, to proceed on the basis of what is available and to describe very preliminary efforts to supplement the available with other types of material.

Attempts to trace movements in the economically active elements of these populations may be made on the basis of data on the main activity of the population during the year preceding the census.[10] Seven categories were identified:

Worked: indicating those persons who were engaged in the production of goods and services for most of the 12 months - this included employers, employees, own account workers, unpaid workers.

Seeking First Job: covers those persons who spent most of the year seeking their first job.

Others Seeking Work: includes those persons who have worked previously but who spent most of the year seeking a job.

Wanted Work and Available: covers those persons who needed a job but who did not spend most of the year job seeking.

Home Duties: refers to persons doing household work but receiving no pay.

Student: indicates those persons who spent most of the year in school but had left by the time of the census.

Retired/Disabled: covers persons retired for all or most of the year.

From these categories, it is possible to build up estimates of the labour force. This may follow the conventional procedure of workers plus seekers or it may be extended to include students and/or those wanting

work and available. Whatever procedure is adopted, the major component of the labour force is undoubtedly the category 'worked'. However, in terms of the number of household heads, over 80 per cent of the males but only 37.9 per cent of the females were recorded as 'worked'. This ranges from the high 45.5 per cent for Barbados to the low 28.4 per cent for Belize. This masks an important distinction which needs to be drawn in terms of membership of the labour force. On the basis of the conventional definition, 89.2 per cent of male household heads are in the labour force as compared with 42.4 per cent of female household heads (Table 5). Within the labour force however, this wide differential disappears. The largest category within the group is the category 'worked' which accounts for 93.2 per cent of the male and 89.3 per cent of the female elements (Tables 6 and 7). Territorial variation is limited. Among males the range is from 98.9 per cent in the Caymans and British Virgin Islands to 91.1 per cent in Trinidad. Among females, the range is from 98.5 per cent in Belize to 84.3 per cent in Jamaica. In fact, proportions of the labour force who work are markedly similar for male and female household heads.

The second most important category numerically is 'other seekers' which amounts to 40 per cent of the total for each sex. 'Wanted work and available' accounts for 2.4 per cent of the males and 5.0 per cent of the females, while proportions of less than 1 per cent are reported as 'students' and as 'seeking first job'. This reflects the age distribution of the household heads, since the latter two categories tend to consist of young persons who have just left school, very few of whom would be deemed household heads.

Of interest are the categories 'others seeking work' and 'wanted work and available', since these contain elements related to levels of unemployment amongst persons who had previously been employed. This is an important consideration in respect of those responsible for conducting the affairs of their households. Total unemployment may be taken to include these two categories in addition to 'first job seekers' and 'students'. According to the estimates built up from these sources, the total unemployment among household heads in the region amounts to 48,000 of which 37,600 or 76.9 per cent consists of males and 13,300 or 23.1 per cent consists of females. This initially suggests extensive unemployment among males. However, in terms of rates, i.e. the proportion of unemployed as a proportion of the labour force, this reflects unemployment rates of 6.8 for males and 10.7 for

females in the region. In every category of unemployed, female rates exceed male. Among the males, it is the 'others seeking work' who contribute the most towards unemployment, the rate of Trinidad-Tobago for this group being as high as 6.9 per cent. By contrast, among the females, it is the 'wanted work and available' group which contributes the most, ranging from 8.3 per cent in Jamaica to less than half of 1 per cent in Belize and the Caymans.

Interestingly enough, it is the larger territories which show the highest rates of unemployment. Among male household heads, Trinidad-Tobago shows the highest unemployment rate of 8.9 per cent as compared with the lowest rate of 1.1 per cent shown by the Caymans. Among female household heads, it is Jamaica which reveals the remarkably high unemployment rate of 15.7 per cent, followed by Trinidad-Tobago with 7.5 per cent.

Occupation

In terms of their occupational classification, more female household heads are involved in non-agricultural activities than males - except in Barbados, Montserrat and Turks. According to Table 8, it is in the service occupations that the greatest proportion of female heads of household are to be found, one-third of their number being located in this occupational category. Only 8.2 per cent are in professional and administrative jobs, 20.9 per cent in clerical and sales and another 18.5 in production and other occupations. Agricultural activities account for 17.4 per cent but the range is wide - from 45.0 per cent in Grenada to 0.3 per cent in the Caymans.

Table 9 shows a markedly different distribution for males. Of the 64.7 per cent involved in non-agricultural activities, about one-third are in production, one-tenth in clerical and sales and also in a miscellaneous group consisting mostly of non-agricultural labourers, and 7 per cent in professional and administrative occupations. By contrast, agriculture accounts for 35.3 per cent of male household heads. This pattern prevails in virtually every territory.

Two indexes may be derived from these data. The first, presented in Table 10, depicts the proportion of female household heads in each occupational category. This proportion, analogous to Boulding's index of femaleness [5] indicates clearly the extent to which females dominate the service industry, are conspicuous in the

sales, clerical and professional occupations and are notably absent from agriculture, production and administrative occupations. Despite some territorial variations, this pattern is evident throughout the region and is probably best depicted by the four larger territories. Among these, the female proportion in service occupations is as high as 0.64 in Jamaica and Barbados, territories with significant sectors of their economy devoted to tourism. But even in Guyana, which records the lowest index among the four (0.36) and indeed the region, this is the occupation which records the highest index among the range of occupational groups covered.

The second index - the index of dissimilarity - uses the approach of Duncan and Duncan [15] and of Gross [20] to measure the extent to which the male (or female) proportional distribution would need to change in order to make the proportional distribution of the two groups identical.[11] For the region, the index amounts to 42, indicating a relatively high degree of occupational dissimilarity between the two sexes. Indexes vary from the high 66 of the British Virgin Islands to the low 22 of Grenada. Those populations which record proportions of over half of the female work force engaged in service occupations, such as the British Virgin Islands and Caymans, register the highest indexes. Those populations in which only about one-fifth of female workers are located in service occupations, e.g. Grenada and St. Vincent, register the lowest indexes. Among the remaining territories the indexes range between 30 and 49 indicating fairly extensive sexual differentiation in the occupational composition of the work force of the region.

To summarize then, females account for about one-third of all household heads in the region. They tend to be older and to live alone to a greater extent than men. Their households are approximately the same size as those for men. About half of them live in residential unions, the remainder (46 per cent) either no longer residing with their partner, or participating in a visiting union (4.8 per cent). They tend to be less educated than their male counterparts and to be less engaged in paid employment (including self-employment). Within the labour force, they are equally involved in work as males, but the pattern of their occupational distribution is markedly different.[12]

Strategies for Survival

The statistical picture of female-headed households provided by the available census data, limited though it may be by unsatisfactory definitions, nevertheless indicates clearly that women who head households are firmly placed among the disadvantaged sections of Caribbean populations. Because such women tend to be at the bottom of the occupational hierarchy, they tend to reside in the poorest sections of the urban areas, in substandard and overcrowded housing with inadequate facilities, or, more often, inadequate and shared facilities. Women functioning within such an environment have elaborated a variety of strategies for survival, ranging from modification of the household composition through manipulation of mating partners, friendship and kinship networks, to dependence on public welfare. Any one, or any combination, of these techniques provides the woman with a source of livelihood for maintaining the household for which she has ultimate responsibility.

In her study of yards in metropolitan Kingston, Brodber [7] has shown how the main source of emotional and material support for daily problems comes from the communal life provided by the yard.[13] Housing units within these yards are rented predominantly by women, many of whom have a semi-resident partner who contributes financially to the upkeep of the unit. Although the partner's contribution is dispensed by the woman, it is nevertheless regarded as the woman's duty to contribute financially to the support of the unit, whether or not the partner actually sleeps in the house. The woman's responsibility therefore extends beyond housework and child care to feeding and clothing of dependents, disciplining the children, paying the rent and so on. To assist in the discharge of these responsibilities, the woman cultivates other women in the yard in such areas as child care, child watching, especially of adolescent girls, sharing household chores, participating in informal credit associations,[14] general companionship, providing sleeping space for the children and so on. In effect, women are able to exploit the communal life offered by a particular form of residential arrangement to assist in the discharge of their own household responsibilities.

Communal residence, however, need not represent the sole source from which women derive assistance. The remainder of this section is devoted to a brief examination of the circumstances of a small group of women who

head households who were part of a pilot study conducted by ISER in connection with the study on the Role of Women in the Caribbean. This study attempts to identify the adaptive strategies employed by women in their role performance in differing life domains and with the changing status of Caribbean women in the context of a rapidly changing socio-economic environment. As part of the study a preliminary questionnaire was administered to 28 women with the aim of testing the feasibility of the proposed questions. The multi-sectoral questionnaire covered background characteristics, sex role attitudes, education history and attitudes to schooling, kinship and friendship networks, woman/child relationships, male/female relationships, work activities, organization and group membership. Of the 28 women interviewed, the circumstances of 10 suggest that they are either *de facto* or *de jure* household heads. Relevant information on these 10 women follows, with occasional comparisons with the other 18 women in the group. Of the 10 women, six lived in urban areas (two middle-income, four lower-income), the remaining four being resident in lower income rural areas. Virtually all of them were aged 35 years and over, the mean age being 43.2 years. This corresponds reasonably closely to the census data for 1970 which reveal a median age for female household heads in Barbados of 54.9 years. The small numbers in the pilot, the different average used and the heavy weighting with women aged 60 and over would explain some of the difference.

Only one woman was childless, the mean number of children still alive being 3.7 with a range of one to nine. No comparable data are available from the 1970 census, but if the mean household size may be used as a proxy, then the figure is the same -3.7, thus providing a crude estimate of the number of persons for whom the woman is directly responsible.

In terms of marital and union status, four of the group had never been married, two were widowed, three were divorced or separated and four were married. Eight of them were not involved in a residential union; although three of those were in a visiting union. Again, this suggests proportions similar to those obtaining with the census data where 54.3 per cent of female-headed households have never been married and 41.9 per cent were not in a union at the time of the census.

In terms of educational attainment, seven women in the group had not progressed beyond the primary level of

education; of which only one had less than five years of primary schooling. Of the three who progressed to a secondary education, two obtained five GCE 'O' level certificates.

In terms of economic characteristics, six women in the group were engaged in some form of income earning activity - two in the home and four outside the home. Those engaged in home production activities used handicraft (macramé) and agriculture (vegetables) as their source of earnings. Among those employed outside the home, two were employed as domestic workers and two were engaged in professional occupations - one in personnel administration and one in life underwriting. For half of the group their own activity represented their main source of income; two women cited their children and partners as their main source of income, one cited herself and her partner, but none depended exclusively on the partner. The two widows depended on death benefits or savings left by the deceased husbands. Alternative sources of income seemed to be tapped only in emergencies and then, only close kin contributed. None of the women were, or had ever been, on welfare assistance programmes.

The general picture which emerges is one in which members of the household rely on a single female adult, the mother, to provide daily income. For those with generally low levels of education only low paying manual jobs are possible, thus the need for assistance is evident. Yet none of these women complained about her situation. In fact one even claimed, "I have friends who are married and are not as happy as me".

None of the literature available on women who head households suggests the extent to which unachieved life ambitions may have affected the way in which women develop flexibility in dealing with their social and economic situations. In an early study of peasants in Jamaica, Smith [46] has shown that occupational choices of both males and females undergo significant changes as they move from adolescence to maturity. Also, that the changes correspond with the individual's perception of job availability and the extent of accommodation they are willing to make to close the gap between reality and desire. A more recent study in Trinidad-Tobago [11] has shown how contextual factors such as socio-economic background, ethnic origin, and school status act as constraints on the students' aspirations and how girls tend to have a lower level of occupational choice than boys. The Jamaican study [46] indicates that girls seem

to be more willing to make accommodations to their life situation than boys. It may be argued that skill in dealing with the differences between reality and desire in one domain - occupational choice - may provide skill in dealing with such differences in other domains. The absence of a male in the household in the role of partner/father may be taken to represent another domain in which accommodations between ideal and actual have to be, and are being, made.

The main areas in which females who head households have to make accommodations would seem to be in respect of sources of income, child care, emotional support and self esteem. Data from the women in the ISER pilot group suggest that the major source of income for these women is generated by their own capacity. Their primary concern is to earn, not to satisfy adolescent aspirations. Even so, their responses indicate that the range of occupational choice continues to be limited and to cover traditionally 'feminine' occupations. On leaving school these women wanted to become nurses, teachers, dressmakers, or to work with children, but only one admitted that she 'never did anything about it'. Two women indicated no occupational preference - one wishing to care for her younger brothers and sisters, the other to get married and have children. Only one woman indicated a wish to further her studies - she wanted to study psychology - and she is the only one whose current job involvement is even minimally related to her adolescent ambitions. She is employed in personnel administration.

The second major area in which accommodations have to be made is that of child care. All of the women in the group expressed a preference for caring their children on their own, but force of circumstances compelled them to seek alternative arrangements. Few of them had the benefit of a non-working mother who could provide that service. The need for more day nurseries was voiced by at least one respondent.

The institutionalization of child care arrangements has been identified as one of the critical issues relating to improvements in women's participation in the labour market [34]. This need has been echoed throughout the Caribbean by women's organizations, child care organizations, welfare departments and on occasion even by government ministers. Such facilities as do exist, are provided mainly for pre-school children whose parents have to be at work. Services are provided by both the

public and private sectors but no estimates of the number of places provided in the region are currently available. In the government-run day nurseries, staff are required to undergo special training in the care of the young, but this obtains only in the better organized private day nurseries. These, in any event, tend to be expensive and therefore inaccessible to lower-income persons. There are also a number of individuals who might be termed child-minders, who operate independently but whose activities have been severely criticized. None of the territories operates a system of registered child-minders as obtains, for example, in the United Kingdom.

According to available data (Table 11), the number of day care centres for pre-schoolers in the Eastern Caribbean ranges from 2 in St. Kitts and Montserrat to 22 in Dominica. Most of them are government-run but several are privately run, mainly by voluntary organizations with funding from local or regional non-profit organizations and, in two cases, with a government technical assistance grant. These figures do not include the nurseries operated by private individuals. The major users of these facilities are children from households headed by women. In Barbados, such use is not restricted to children from lower-income households but in recent years has extended to children from middle-income households. But they too are from households headed by women [Weekes 55].

Day care facilities for school age children outside of school hours and during the vacation present particular problems for working parents. None of the territories operates a government scheme to deal with this problem. In some territories private organizations sponsor holiday camps during the summer vacation. The YMCA in Barbados, for example, sponsors two consecutive two-week camps for about 60 children each summer. But this is not a general trend either in Barbados or elsewhere in the region. Further, the small numbers involved reflect nothing of the immensity of the problem of providing proper supervision for children during these periods.

One final source of child care lies in the residential establishments operated mainly by voluntary organizations either on their own or in collaboration with government authorities. These provide for orphans and for children who have been abandoned or whose parents are unable to provide proper accommodation and maintenance. Available

data from Barbados suggest that while a certain amount of short-term care is provided, the vast majority of children are in long-term care. Further, that virtually all of the long-term cases are children from female-headed households. The main reasons for their admission are hospitalization of the mother or eviction of mother and children by the mother's current partner (who may or may not be the children's father) [Weekes 55].

The women of the ISER pilot group have demonstrated that they deal with the problem of child care as need and circumstances dictate. Arrangements range from combining work in the home with child care, to the use of female relatives (usually mother, grandmother or aunt), older children either from the home or the neighbourhood, day nurseries and even to taking the children to the workplace. One domestic worker used to take her young children to the home in which she worked: "The people used to understand. I worked for some nice people. My children had a corner of the house to play in". Older children of school age are left to fend for themselves after school and during holidays. None of the women was dependent on any of the institutionalized child care facilities available.

These strategies do not differ from those employed by women who do not head households. One such woman sought a job with flexible working hours which permitted her to be at home at the same time as her children. One gave up her university studies to be at home with her youngest child. Three others preferred to care for their own children rather than seek employment or pursue studies. Three women in this group were fortunate enough to be able to afford a maid or 'nanny' to care their children during their absence at work.

The experience of women in this pilot group suggests that the existence of a need for sufficient and suitable child care facilities does not prevent women from devising their own strategies to cope with that need. Some of these strategies may not be ideal, e.g. leaving younger children in the care of older ones, or leaving them unattended, often with tragic results. However, the women recognize their inability to do otherwise and plead, "There is need for more nurseries here".

Child care, however, represents only one of the myriad problems which women managing their own households face. The psychological stresses and strains inherent in their double burden of responsibility suggest a need for emotional

support, particularly during times of trouble, which a resident partner may have been able to provide. This represents the third major area in which accommodations need to be devised. Recent studies [Ladner 26, Smith 48, Stack 49, 50] have shown that one of the many positive aspects of the so-called matrifocal family lies in its ability to manipulate a cluster of kin and friendship networks in order to facilitate the discharge of domestic functions. The women in the small group in the ISER pre-test provide tentative evidence of this feature. They appear not to derive emotional and material support from communal residence to the extent which Brodber describes for Jamaica. They do, however, draw on near kin, particularly those located nearby, to assist with child care responsibilities. For other kinds of assistance different strategies are employed. Women in the group differentiated between financial problems for which they sought help from parents, especially mothers and siblings, and other kinds of problems, for which they turned to other kin, friends and authority figures such as the parson or the doctor. Those women who made no such distinction tended to draw on support from their partner, their baby's father or a good friend, usually a female, but male friends were also cited as reliable sources of support:

> Someone you can rely on and they can rely on you. Someone to talk things with which they don't repeat. Someone to trust. I prefer male friends. Women don't keep their mouth shut. Men fight and 'gree again - not women.

Despite the apparent preference for parents, especially the mother, and partners as sources of assistance, it was girlfriends who were most frequently cited as persons to whom the woman turns when problems arise:

> I can ask her to do anything for me and she is always ready and willing. She would do for me first and leave herself out.
>
> ...
>
> She is a good conversationalist. We help each other financially and otherwise - with work and so.
>
> ...
>
> She's a good woman, and she has the time because she don't have her own children. I can call on her for help.

Again, women who do not head households do not differ in terms of alternative sources of support, from women who do. They too draw on kin for immediate practical assistance such as child care, or financial emergencies. But they also tend to look outside of the immediate kin network for other forms of support. Among these women too the sex of the friend is irrelevant:

> He understands me. He is one of the few persons in my life who doesn't pamper me. He tells me like it is.

But it is women friends who tend to figure more prominently:

> My employer - she shows a lot of love and understanding. I am like family. She helps me out of my worries.
>
> ...
>
> My girl friend is the person I can discuss my woman-problems with - she tells me her feeling about the trouble I'm having with the children or my man... I can talk about my money worries.

In effect, the women in this pilot group appeared to activate lines of exchange and obligation which extend outside of the kin network and which provide satisfactory levels of emotional support. This appears to be in contra-distinction to findings of earlier studies which have tended to suggest that male peer groups are social units through which males gain recognition and respect [Wilson 56] while among females, dyadic ties tend to be restricted to close kinship and domestic bonds, with extra-familial relationships being prescribed by formal groups, specifically the church [Dirks 14]. By contrast, more recent studies have shown that lower class creole women maintain closely knit informal relationships, which may or may not develop into formal clubs, but which provide a means of adaptation to marginal resources [Brana-Shute 6] and development of a sense of solidarity. A study in Montserrat specifically recommends the need for investigation of female friendship networks [Moses 35, 36]: "Who women associate with (other females or males) is important, because it is a way of measuring the degree of alternatives that women have in a culture and the degree to which the sexes are segregated socially" [35 p.242]. Data from the pilot study do not appear to suggest that women who head households depend on such networks to a greater extent than women who do not. They do suggest that female friend-

ship ties represent an important component in the strategies which women develop for their survival.

Experience with male partners represents the final area to be considered from the perspective of the women in the pilot study since this may affect the value they place on themselves as individuals. The one married woman in the group of female household heads deemed her marriage unsuccessful because her husband, who was living overseas, 'didn't have enough personality and will power'. Despite this, she depended on remittances from him to run the household. The one woman in a common-law union considered that her ten year old relationship had worked out 'half and half' but had prevented her from migrating as she would have wished. Among the younger single women and those in visiting unions, the theme of independence looms large

> Being single fits in with my independent thinking.
>
> ...
>
> I like freedom, so I'm keeping it [the visiting union] like it is.

Women who do not head households are no different in terms of their desire for freedom. One such currently single woman claims:

> You're free. You don't have anybody to dominate over you.

However, older single women whether or not they run their own households react to the loneliness caused by the absence of a male partner:

> A distressing state. I never wished it - and when you're older, its lonely.

Evidently, regardless of social status and household circumstances, the women in this pilot group were seeking similar qualities in their partners - honesty, companionship, financial support, love, 'total' sharing of life experiences. Some women did find these qualities in past and present partners, but most didn't:

> He was too miserable.
>
> ...
>
> He found a woman who had a lot of money and land and married her.

> He was totally selfish.
>
> ...
>
> What money he gave was not enough. If I spoke to him about management of money he said it was his money. Yet he didn't want me to work.
>
> ...
>
> His personality and mine didn't mesh.

Yet, unfortunate experiences with partners have not made these women bitter:

> I'm happy to be a woman.
>
> ...
>
> It's nice to be a woman.

Nor have they made them undervalue their own ability:

> Women are not treated as equals to men, but they are really more than men.
>
> ...
>
> I feel I could compete with any male. If you have the ability to talk and if you're ambitious, you could push and shove. This should get you through ... You learn to understand that women can take more pressures.

The women in this small pilot study represent a variety of life experiences. They do not all originate in lower income, economically marginal groups; their demographic characteristics are varied; their working patterns are diverse. The only really common feature is that each of them bears sole responsibility for the affairs of her household. While the circumstances which brought this about have varied, they have all exhibited considerable ability to manipulate their available resources, no matter how slender, in order to provide for their dependents. Despite the many problems they face, none of these women exhibits any desire to be solely dependent on a man. Their attitudes to men and their own self image differ little from women who share their household responsibilities with a male partner.

The Poorest of the Poor

Whether a household is headed by a male or female, the same basic needs of food, clothing and shelter have to be accommodated. The absence of one partner does not necessarily reduce the cost of providing basic services, in fact, costs may well be higher since they cannot be shared. For example, it may become necessary to pay for certain services which may have been rendered by a partner, e.g. minor house maintenance and repairs, child-care and child-minding. On the other hand, where one partner is functioning as the *de facto* head of the household with little or no assistance from the other, costs are further raised since the non-contributing partner benefits from the available services. Women who bear the sole responsibility for their households have four main sources of income: earnings from their own economic activity, maintenance payments for their children, widows' benefits, and supplementary benefits.

Supplementary benefits may take the form of national insurance benefits, allowances permitted on income tax and public assistance. In addition, a range of benefits are provided under the various health and education services. No specific schemes are available for women who head households. Those who support themselves by regular employment can derive benefit from tax allowances and national insurance benefits. Those who cannot support themselves are forced to rely on public assistance. Regrettably, there are no data to indicate the relative importance of these various sources of supplementary income to women who head households. Available data for one developed country clearly indicate that at least half of the fatherless families rely on supplementary benefits provided by national assistance [Report 18].

A brief description of the principal sources of financial assistance available in Barbados, one of the so-called MDCs in the Caribbean is given in Appendix I. Of the five major sources listed, the most important for the majority of women who head households is national assistance.

How does the system function? General policy is determined at the national level by a Public Assistance Board and is executed on an islandwide basis by relevant sections within the Welfare Department of the Ministry of Labour and Community Services. The National Assistance Section is concerned with the provision of financial assistance according to the regulations laid down by the board. The Family Services Section attempts to secure financial support from errant fathers for the children of women who apply for national assistance. Such assistance may be in the form of money, food or clothing, or some combination thereof and may also consist of outdoor assistance.

Under the prevailing regulations, cash grants and assistance in kind may be provided to persons of either sex on the basis of necessity for the duration of need. The current rate for cash grants is $2.50 per week for children under 16 years of age. Children attending school full time are eligible not only for the cash grant but also for school clothing, school fees, spectacles and other necessities. Adults are eligible to a minimum rate of $1.50 and a maximum of $2.50 but if disabled the grant is increased to a minimum of $5.00 and a maximum of $8.00 per week. Women who are unemployed, whose wages are low, who are receiving no child support or whose partners are unemployed are eligible, in addition to the cash grant for themselves and each child, to such items as furniture and clothing where circumstances require.[15] In practice, while the payments are intended to augment income derived from other benefits, including earnings, they often turn out to be the only source of income for the woman and her household.

While the selection process is based on a 'most needy' case approach, females, and specifically females who head households, tend to receive more assistance than males. This arises partly because, as one official put it, "Females are more willing to come forward and ask for help, but the males are more hesitant to admit that they need help." (Personal communication). More important, however, in situations of chronic unemployment, seasonal employment and low wages, men are finding it increasingly difficult to support their households or, where they are not resident, their children. Thus women are forced to exploit every available avenue to eke out a livelihood for themselves and their children.

Data from the ISER pilot group suggest that some women who head households may be managing their affairs with a modicum of success, in that they have not been forced to seek financial support from government institutions. Such women are generally of low to modest income and have struggled with immense problems in order to maintain themselves and their children. Many women, however, are not as fortunate. Available data suggest that despite their ingenuity, more and more of these women are being forced to rely on public welfare to assist them in their plight. However, the procedures involved in obtaining such assistance have been subject to a number of criticisms. One frequent argument relates to the inordinate delay which often occurs between the request for and the receipt of assistance. Another relates to the inquisitorial procedures which involve extensive questioning by one or more public officers. A third relates to the impersonal dispensation of assistance in the welfare offices. It is argued that these factors tend to intimidate prospective seekers and prevent assistance from reaching where it is most needed.

In Barbados, the process takes from two to four weeks, depending on the woman's circumstances, and involves at least three officers. Initially, a formal application is submitted to the Welfare Department, either in writing or verbally. A welfare officer visits the household, interviews the applicant and submits a written report to a senior officer who makes the final decision. This may sometimes involve the applicant in another visit to the department. The written decision is mailed to the applicant who is then required to report to the department, collect a record card from one officer and present it to another who makes the payment. Where the payment is granted for several weeks, the applicant can spend three or four hours per week simply sitting in a hot, overcrowded and uncomfortable room waiting her turn to be paid. Additionally, where the case needs to be reviewed periodically, more time has to be spent being interviewed by welfare officers.

The fact that hundreds of women subject themselves to this procedure week after week attests to the severity of their financial circumstances and their utter dependence on what is basically nothing more than a system of poor relief.

Some Case Histories

In order to further elaborate the situation of women who head households, active case histories of 38 national assistance recipients were examined. Twenty-seven of the

cases were residents in urban areas and 11 in rural areas. Among the urban cases, 20 were *de jure* heads of household, in that there was no resident male partner. Among the remaining seven with resident partner/husband, three partners were chronically ill, one was blind and the remaining three were employed only intermittently. For practical purposes, at least the first four of these could be considered *de facto* heads of household. In the rural areas, only two out of the 11 cases had a resident partner. In terms of marital status, the 38 women studied included four who were married at the time of their first visit to the national assistance section of the Welfare Department, six who were separated from their husbands and 22 who had never been married, four of whom were in common law unions.

An important demographic aspect of the women who seek national assistance is their age. The average (mean) age at the first visit was 35 among urban women and 32 among rural, with a range of 22 to 64 in the former and 15 to 56 in the latter. This suggests that women are being forced to seek national assistance in what should be the prime years of their working lives. If most women use the scheme during a temporary financial setback there would be no cause for concern. However, the age at which they seek assistance coupled with the length of time for which their cases remain active suggest the need for exploring alternative forms of assistance. Of the 38 cases under review, 14 were active for less than five years, as against 24 active for five years or more and, of these,five were active for as many as 10 years. The mean duration of time spent on national assistance is 6.1 years. If this is combined with the mean age at entry into the system, it is clear that national assistance has become the main source of livelihood for this group of women. Further, since none of the cases was closed, it is possible that national assistance will continue to remain the main source of support for many years. In effect, the problem of women who head households who constitute virtually all national assistance cases, is a long-term one and should be treated as such.

An important indicator of the level of responsibility borne by these women is the number of children under their care. At the first visit,none of the 38 women whose cases were examined was childless. Ten had less than three children, 18 had between three and five children and 10 had six or more children. The mean number of children at first visit was 5.0 among urban women and 3.1 among rural women. By the time of the most recent visit, 19 women had less than three children, 34 had between three and five children

and 24 had six or more children. This gives a mean number of 5.5 children per urban woman and 4.0 per rural woman by the time of the most recent visit. Together, these figures imply that a total of 169 children on the first visit and 192 on the last were spending their formative years in an environment affected by the absence of adequate financial support, a lack of proper discipline and a mother who must inevitably be affected psychologically by the stress which her disproportionate responsibilities must entail. Further, of the women with three or more children, virtually all were between ages 25-44, precisely the ages at which they would be most amenable to training. But the increasing numbers of children and the associated increasing problems make such training virtually impossible.

It has been shown that in the U.S.A. each additional child to a woman who heads a family, increases the probability of the family income remaining below the poverty line [Stein 51]. This occurs because the woman's prospects for economic independence and security through employment decline with the additional responsibility of more children. This argument holds equally well in poor developing countries like Barbados where considerable emphasis is placed on education and vocational training as a prerequisite for acceptable forms of employment and where the pattern of 'grandmother' families is no longer dominant.

The available data suggest that households receiving national assistance benefits rely on those benefits as the principal, in some cases the sole, source of livelihood. At the time of the first visit only three of the 38 women were employed - two in domestic service, one in petty trade - with average weekly earnings of $24. Among the 35 who were unemployed at the time of the first visit, 10 obtained employment subsequently. Four were domestic service workers, four agricultural labourers and two were employed as cottage workers doing smocking for the garment industry. The average weekly earning was $26 in the urban areas and $36 in the rural areas. None of the 38 except the 13 who were employed for brief periods, was able to supplement the national assistance benefit by personal earnings.

The evidently limited availability of financial resources raises the question of alternative support. One possible clue may lie in the household structure in that the presence of adults may represent a potential source of additional income. Of the 38 cases, 10 consisted of the woman and her children alone, while nine included a resident partner. A further 14 cases consisted of three generational

households comprising grandmother, mother and children; four cases were laterally extended structures in that they consisted of a woman and her children, her sister(s) and/or brother(s) with their children, and one case included a woman, her children and her maternal aunt. In effect, two-thirds of the households contain at least one other adult member from whom a financial contribution should theoretically be available. In practice, however, this is far from being the case. In the three generation households, the grandmother contributes either by virtue of her ownership of the house, which is often in a dilapidated condition, by paying the house rent, if she is employed, or by giving her pension to the younger woman. In the four laterally extended households, one sister was able to contribute by paying the house rent and another was the sole source of support. The others were either unemployed or of school age. In the nine households with a resident partner, four partners were ill (one mentally ill, one blind and two incapacitated), five were employed intermittently and contributed when they could, one owned the house in which the couple lived, but provided nothing else. Among the remaining households, assistance came from occasional child support payments, from adult children who contributed when able and from friends.

Altogether, each of the 38 households contained an average of about 2.5 adults of whom an average of less than one provided some form of income contribution and that only occasionally. In the rural areas, the non-contributing household members tended to be mothers and grandmothers and, to a lesser extent, aunts, i.e. persons of relatively advanced age whose ability to contribute would be minimal. In the urban areas, the non-contributory household members tended to be unemployed sisters, daughters and partners. The main contributors in both types of areas were sons, partners and brothers, all of them doing so only when economic circumstances permit. The distinguishing characteristic of the cases studied is that they originate in households characterized by an absence of a main income earner. Even where two or more earners were present, employment was intermittent and concentrated in the low-skill, low-paying occupations. Thus none of the households could be classified as having a steady source of income and reliance on national assistance can be expected to continue.

Another potential source of income lies in child support payments from fathers of children. The number of fathers responsible for the 169 children dependent on the 38 women was 76, thus there was an average of two fathers

per household with a range of one to seven. Presumably, if each father contributed to his child(ren) at the prevailing rate of $10 per week, the household income would average at least $40 per week. If the woman was employed, even at a minimum wage, welfare assistance could then be used as a temporary relief measure. It has been argued that on the basis of this line of reasoning, many women deliberately cultivate a series of partners with the specific intention of collecting several support payments. In this way, she can be assured of a steady income without herself having to be engaged in economic activity. Fathers, however, do not appear to contribute with any degree of regularity, if they contribute at all. Of the 76 men involved, 20 provide support of some kind as they are able. Another 26 provide no support, either because they refuse to do so, their whereabouts are unknown or they prefer to go to jail rather than honour a court order. Another 14 have migrated, nine are deceased and six are ill, five of them mentally. Once again, another possible source of income proves chimerical.

Six case histories are appended. These highlight the differing kinds of situations which force women to assume total responsibility for their households and which force them to rely on social welfare as an important, in some cases the only, source of income.[16] All of the cases originate in low income areas within the main urban parish. All of the women were relatively young, being between 25 and 34 on their first visit; all of them had no more than three children; all of them were unemployed at the time of their first visit, though two were able to find employment later on. In two of the six cases [Cases I and II], there was a resident male, but both of them worked intermittently and in one case, no sooner was regular employment obtained than the man was crippled by permanent illness [Case II]. In another, minimal assistance was provided by persons outside of the household, a mother and the father of one child [Case V]. In all cases it was the women who made the request for assistance and in all cases it is evident that the household depends for its existence on the woman's ingenuity. In only one case was the household on welfare for less than five years [Case V], one case being on the books for as many as nine years [Case I]. In no case do the circumstances suggest that it is reasonable to expect a cessation of welfare in the short term. The case reviews therefore serve to validate the distinction drawn by Buvinić and Youssef between *de jure* and *de facto* heads of household [8]. They also support the census data findings in respect of employment among these women.

The main problems faced by the women cited in these cases have been monetary, but other cases reveal other problems. Housing conditions, for example, are revealed to be poor and substandard. In some cases the Welfare Department finances the repair of the house or in others it recommends the case to the Housing Authority for provision of public housing. Within the past year, the department has established an internal housing unit which seeks to deal with housing problems more quickly. Another critical problem area relates to the care and supervision of children. In cases where the single (female) parent is employed, and no other adult lives in the household, it is not uncommon for older children to be kept at home to care for pre-school children, or even for the young ones to be left unsupervised in the home [Weekes 55]. Alternative arrangements include child-minders in the immediate neighbourhood, privately run nurseries which are very costly or day care centres operated by the government subsidized Child Care Board. Fees at these centres are fixed at $2.50 per week and the majority of children using the facilities are drawn from female-headed households [Weekes 55]. But even with this range of facilities, the problem of supervision of children during the mothers' working hours remains critical.

Several factors appear to have contributed to the circumstances of these households. Essentially, it is a combination of unemployment [Case VI], intermittent employment [Cases I and II], low wages [Case II], large numbers of children (i.e. 6+ children) [Cases III and V], emigration of male partner [Case III], ill health [Cases II and III], unscrupulous male partners [Case IV] and perhaps, even sheer ill luck [Case II]. Evidently, the quantum of assistance in cash is abysmally low, but in poor countries, where a little has to be spread a long way, it is hardly likely that a more attractive grant can be offered. Where, however, the grant is supplemented by other assistance, such as shoes and clothing, it cannot be denied that some help is available. Further, in the case of old persons living alone, who receive not only old age pension, but also clothing, food, daily hot meals, in some cases, and payment of water rates and electricity bills, there can be no doubt that at least some of the needs of these women are being met.

The question of child support payments raises rather different issues. According to the present laws of Barbados, the court is authorized to order the payment of a fixed sum - a maximum of $30 per week for the wife and

$10 per week for all children under 16 years of age - and in default to impose the remedy of distress or the penalty of imprisonment.[17] The wife forfeits her right to this entitlement on evidence of adultery. However, the entitlement of the children of the marriage is preserved. For women in other unions, no such support obligation is provided by law. What is possible, through the Affiliation Act, is an Affiliation Order in favour of the children, provided satisfactory evidence of the child's paternity is established. The woman has no legal claim to financial assistance [Forde 17].

In both cases, the procedural requirements necessary both to fix the maintenance payment and to secure that payment are regarded as unduly restrictive. The National Commission on the Status of Women felt that the principle of a fixed maximum is unsatisfactory since in many cases orders are known not to reflect either the magnitude of the problem or the ability of the partner to pay [Weekes 55]. For example, data for the years 1975 and 1976 indicate that of a total of 1,008 orders, 873 related to affiliation cases and 135 to married women's cases. Neither figure is regarded as a true reflection of the extent to which women need this source of income. In the case of married women, for example, although the divorce courts represent a viable alternative, the legal fees are so prohibitive that women prefer to seek a magistrate's court order for maintenance or not to use the courts at all.

Evidence from a variety of sources suggests that considerable difficulty obtains in the enforcement and collection of court orders [Cumper 13, Jackson 24, Weekes 55]. In Barbados, high rates of default have been reported: "Some men, besides shirking their full responsibility of parenthood, allow arrears to accumulate and seem to prefer to go to prison in default of payment" [Weekes 55, p.684]. In one of the cases examined for this study, one father even threatened to kill the woman if she sought a court order against him for the support of his child. In an attempt to deal with this problem, the National Commission on the Status of Women recommended that enforcement procedures be reviewed and attachment of earnings be introduced (recommendation no. 16), that the application of a fixed sum for maintenance be abolished (recommendation no. 14), and that a means test be applied before affiliation and maintenance orders are adjudicated (recommendation no. 168). Of these, steps are being taken to implement recommendation no. 16, but nothing has been done so far about either recommendation no. 14 or recommendation no. 168.

In Jamaica, the only territory so far to establish a Family Court, orders are made according to the discretion of the judge, a means test may be instituted by the probation department on the recommendation of the judge and children must be supported to the age of 16, or if deemed necessary, to the age of 18. The problem of non-compliance with court orders has been tackled by the implementation of attachment orders, which permit routine deduction from the father's income, collection by specially designated court officers and the issuance of a warrant of distress if the allowance falls into arrears [Jackson 24]. Despite these laudable efforts, the major constraint on child-support collection efforts in these territories is the location of the errant fathers. In situations where mobility within the country is so easy, where emigration out of the country is so prevalent and where some men simply prefer to go to prison rather than settle child-support payments, the problem becomes intensified. The plight of women and children dependent on those payments becomes that much more unfortunate.

Conclusion

The region from which the data presented in this paper originate represents one of the world regions which has been described as being at an intermediate level of economic development - the so-called 'middle income nations'. One of the territories, Jamaica, has even been placed in the upper middle income category of this intermediate range on the strength of per capita income in excess of $1,075 in 1975, a level which markedly exceeds those prevailing for many countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America. According to the World Bank, gross domestic product per capita income ranged from $1,131 (U.S.) in Jamaica to $335 (U.S.) in Grenada in 1974 [Chernick 10]. This masks a considerable amount of internal variation. In order to illustrate the degree of poverty prevailing in the region, the World Bank has developed a Food Working Days Index which indicates the number of days that a person in the occupational category showing the lowest mean wage in each territory would have had to work in the period June-August, 1973 to buy a basket of basic goods. The proportion of the working population concentrated in the lowest paid categories is used as an indicator of the extent of poverty [Chernick 10]. On this basis, indexes of the degree of poverty are seen to range from 7.72 in St. Kitts/Nevis to 2.08 in Jamaica in 1973, with a mean for the region of 3.61. The index of the extent of poverty ranges from 54.0 in Jamaica to 10.2 in Antigua in 1970 with a mean for the region of 35.5.

From this it is evident that the region is undoubtedly a poor one. Along with poverty, unemployment and inequality of income must rank as the major economic problems of the region. As elsewhere in the Third World, it is on women that these problems impinge most heavily [Antrobus 1].

One of the groups most readily identifiable and most vulnerable to poverty is that group of women who head households. Such women retain prime responsibility for child care, sometimes care of other adults, home maintenance and income earning on behalf of other household members.

Women in the Caribbean have been socialized essentially for parental, conjugal and domestic roles but, historically, have been associated with considerable occupational role performance. The success with which they have manipulated their occupational roles has in part been related to their level of formal education and vocational training, the availability of job employment opportunities and the level of earnings available. More importantly, it has been related to their ability to manipulate such personal resources as they may possess in order to exploit the available income earning possibilities. Allied to this is their ability to combine income earning activities, whether within or outside of the home, with household responsibility. An extended family structure provides the woman with access to a source of child care and home maintenance support and permits her to experiment with alternative economic support strategies.

This partially explains the ability of rural and urban lower income women to control the local fruit and vegetable section of the distributive sector for many years. The modernization process of Caribbean economies over the past 20 or 30 years, with its highly visible focus on imported technology, specialized enterprises, and individualistic philosophy has served to undercut women in the one area in which they had attained predominance. Thus, although women are still found in large numbers in the informal sector, few of them retain prominence in the local food distribution chain. Instead, they are to be found as petty traders lining the streets of the major towns, subject, to an even greater extent than the big merchants, to the vicissitudes of the international monetary economy. At the same time, the decline of the extended family has brought to the forefront the problem of combining income earning and home maintenance activities. For women who head households this represents a crucial consideration.

The data analyzed in the earlier sections of this paper not only provide some insights into the characteristics and coping strategies of females who head households but also identify poverty as the major problem of such households. The census data indicate clearly that women who head households are concentrated in low paid, low status occupations with no prospects for improvement. They are more likely to be unemployed than their male counterparts, more likely to be involved in low paying occupations and more likely to be untrained for any occupation at all. The data from the ISER study suggest that regardless of income earning level and socio-economic background, women who head households face similar problems, the most critical of which appear to be related to sources of livelihood and child care obligations. As in many other countries, these women depend to a large extent on the creation of network alliances which permit reciprocal arrangements with other females for child care and household duties, food or cash in emergency situations and general emotional support [Koussoudji and Mueller 25, Nieves 38, Powell 40].

The welfare data indicate that recipients of national assistance grants are overwhelmingly women who are *de facto* heads of households, virtually all of whom are unemployed. Theirs is the problem of poverty. Presumably, if such women were employed in similar occupations and receiving similar income to men they would be exposed to less poverty and less dependence on welfare. This point has been argued for both developed [McEaddy 28,29, Sawhill 45, Stein 51] and developing countries [Safa 44]. The tragedy of these women is that no immediate solution appears imminent. Discontinuance of welfare assistance is clearly an untenable proposition since the earning strategies employed by the women have not been markedly successful.

The first strategy which seems to be attempted is to seek employment. Younger women may find employment in the commercial, manufacturing and service industries. But unless they are well educated, such employment tends to be short term. Older women, who are unlikely to have any occupational training, attempt a range of activities such as washing, ironing, cleaning, casual labour and petty trade. Invariably, such activities also tend to be short term. Further, unanticipated changes in the household arrangements, e.g. ill health of partner, birth of baby, eviction, might require immediate attention to the exclusion of wage earning activity.

Another strategy appears to be multi-partnering. In the Dominican Republic, it has been represented that multiple serial mating indicates the presence of a flexible male network which not only functions as a nuclear family but affords the woman food, shelter, 'reproductive success' and psychological satisfaction [Brown 3,4]. By contrast, a study in Brazil suggests that this strategy is not always successful [Merrick and Schmink 33]. The pilot study data in this study suggest that the practice is regarded with disapproval: "I don't like the idea of moving in with a man and having to move out, then moving in with another ... I don't believe in having children from different men." The welfare data suggest that if it is being used as a coping strategy it is singularly unsuccessful. Both past and present partners are contributing either nothing or very little to the woman's household even if he has fathered any of her children. Some of this may be attributable to unscrupulous males but much appears to be related to the constraints on employment and earning possibilities for males which severely limit their ability to contribute to the household. Migration, abscondment and jail may well represent rational alternatives to shame and embarrassment.

Another type of strategy appears to be reliance on other members of the household. Data not used in this paper suggest that in the Caribbean, dependence on children as economic supporters is not widespread owing to the great value attached to schooling. Thus households can only derive some benefit from wage earning children when those children leave school. And then, they are likely to be either unemployed or earning low levels of income which provide only marginal assistance, if it is offered to the household at all. Other adults in the household tend to be beyond the prime working age, and to be female rather than male, thus they too face the same constraints in terms of job opportunities as the head of the household. With little or no supplementary earnings from other members of the household, the woman responsible for the household is then forced to turn to the welfare system as a valid economic option for the survival of her household. Alternative sources of assistance may exist but the data do not identify these and, in the case of the welfare data, there is little evidence that such sources are actively sought. A heavy burden is thus placed on meagre welfare sources of basically impoverished societies.

One of the deficiencies of national statistical infrastructures in the region is the inability to provide what may be construed as estimates of a poverty threshold.

It is therefore not possible to indicate the proportion of female-headed households currently existing below such a line. What is evident is that those which depend exclusively on welfare payments to compensate for lack of an earned income by the woman or lack of child support payments, do exist at levels well below a minimally acceptable level of living, however that is defined. Prevailing welfare payments are patently incapable of providing economic security to the woman and her household. Yet they are crucial to their existence.

Although the need for welfare provisions is recognized, the relationship between welfare assistance and female-headed households is by no means straightforward. It may be that increasing numbers of female household heads have forced authorities to devise welfare assistance programmes of a particular type. By contrast, it may also be that the continual availability of institutional support of the kind provided by welfare programmes acts to encourage the establishment of female household heads. Case V, for example, seems to suggest this. If the latter is the case, then the need for a reassessment of existing programmes and reformulation of policy becomes evident.

The choice for Caribbean societies would seem to be that between programmes designed to sustain and those designed to rehabilitate. In the latter regard, planners need to emphasize policies which include skills acquisition, income generating and adult education programmes, for both males and females. The general aim of such programmes should be to provide poor households not only with basic necessities but also with the motivation and the capacity for self-improvement.

Policies directed towards males should be aimed at providing them with an economic resource base which could equip them to fulful their household responsibilities. Policies directed towards females should aim at the following:

1. Devising income generating programmes which not only permit women to work from within the household, but provide them with the physical and capital assets required to do so.

2. Ensuring that employment creating programmes contain a component designed specifically for women.

3. Providing institutionally supported child care centres operating at times convenient to the woman's work schedules.

4. Expanding the opportunities for part-time work.

5. Increasing opportunities for furthering formal education and for receiving technical training.

It is important that the programmes designed to execute such policies not be restricted to traditional approaches. By providing technical training in non-traditional areas, by arranging with employers and trade unions appropriate conditions of work for part-time workers, and by organizing certain kinds of work on a cottage-industry basis, it is immediately possible to provide older women with a wider range of occupational choices. By expanding the notion of day care services to include such options as day fostering, registered child minders, employers' day nurseries, combination day nurseries and play groups and home help for the care of the elderly, it is immediately possible to provide a safe environment for the dependents of women who head households during the time they are at work. By including in programmes for adult education, arrangements for the release from work of early school leavers in order to permit them to complete their education, it is possible to equip young men and women for participation in the job market.

These proposals are based not only on an evaluation of the situation but also on the observations of women themselves. The women in the pilot study were asked "What kinds of projects for women would you like to see organizations introduce in your area?" Their responses are instructive:

> I would like to see them get together any talent that can be used to help in any way. They could form groups not only for selling but also in a charitable way. They should try to give younger people more understanding about parenthood and so on. They could come together in a group, make things and get them sold... to raise funds. It can help if one week one person can't pay the rent. The theme would have to be "Love you one another".

...

> I would like to see these organizations give women help so they can take mothers and teach them different things like providing things for children which they couldn't provide.
>
> ...
>
> Poor women should have people come into their community rather than the women going out. You would be able to look after your children if people come in to you.
>
> ...
>
> I would like to see these organizations help the women to get employment when they are finished being involved in a particular project.
>
> ...
>
> I would like those organizations to start uplifting woman the same way they used to preach that man is more than woman.

The dominant themes in these statements provide the basis for a comprehensive policy programme - self-fulfilment, skills training, job-creation, child care, flexible programme schedules, adult education especially for the younger people, community cooperation. These proposals should be treated as an integrated package guided by the expressed concerns of the women affected rather than a loose and fragmented collection of programmes. By this means it is possible to assist women who currently face the problem of managing their households singlehandedly; to equip younger women to cope with that problem if it arises later in their lives; and, maybe, even to reduce the rising incidence of this phenomenon.

Table 1: Various Characteristics of Household Heads

Territory	Proportion (%) of Households Headed by Women	Median Age of Female Household Heads	Mean Size of Households Headed by Women	Proportion (%) of Female Household Heads never Married	Proportion (%) of Female Household Heads not in Union	Proportion (%) of Female Household Heads with only Primary Education	Proportion (%) of Female Household Heads in Work Force	Index of Dissimilarity of Occupations
Jamaica	33.8	48.9	3.9	62.4	47.9	92.4	40.0	48.4
Trinidad-Tobago	27.0	51.0	4.1	34.9	48.1	89.2	30.6	39.0
Guyana	22.4	49.7	4.5	29.8	55.9	90.7	31.1	47.3
Barbados	42.9	54.9	3.7	54.3	41.9	47.5	45.5	43.2
Belize	24.8	48.4	4.7	44.1	43.2	93.8	28.4	54.1
St. Lucia	40.9	48.7	4.1	56.3	38.7	96.6	39.8	31.3
Grenada	45.3	52.4	4.5	58.3	46.8	95.5	45.4	22.0
St. Vincent	45.4	49.3	4.9	67.3	36.1	96.8	38.7	24.9
Dominica	42.4	50.3	4.1	57.1	48.2	96.0	44.1	30.7
St. Kitts/Nevis	46.6	51.4	4.1	59.7	44.3	93.8	40.8	33.5
Montserrat	43.7	58.6	3.4	59.9	44.8	96.1	34.5	40.7
British Virgin Is.	24.3	46.3	4.0	47.4	41.4	88.6	44.2	66.3
Cayman Islands	35.5	52.2	4.7	32.2	30.4	89.9	34.8	62.3
Turks & Caicos	40.3	44.6	4.0	32.1	33.9	93.2	35.2	33.8
Mean	32.0		4.0		47.5	88.3	37.9	41.8
High	46.6	54.9	4.9	67.3	55.9	96.8	45.5	66.3
Low	22.4	44.6	3.4	29.8	30.4	47.5	30.6	22.0

Source: Tables 1-10 are derived from University of the West Indies, Census Research Programme, *1970 Population Census of the Commonwealth Caribbean, Vol. 9, Housing and Household*, Kingston, 1975.

Table 2: Proportional Distribution of Female Household Heads by Marital Status, 1970

Territory	Never Married	Married	Widowed	Divorced or Separated	Total
Jamaica	62.4	18.9	16.5	2.2	142,000
Trinidad-Tobago	34.9	32.3	29.7	3.1	52,000
Guyana	29.8	30.4	34.1	5.8	28,900
Barbados	54.3	24.3	19.4	2.0	25,100
Belize	44.1	33.7	20.7	1.5	5,700
St. Lucia	56.3	24.1	19.3	0.5	8,900
Grenada	58.3	19.3	20.0	2.5	8,900
St. Vincent	67.3	20.3	11.4	1.0	7,700
Dominica	57.1	21.4	19.6	1.8	6,400
St. Kitts/Nevis	59.7	22.7	16.1	1.5	5,200
Montserrat	59.9	20.5	17.6	2.0	1,400
British Virgin Islands	47.4	28.1	20.7	3.9	600
Cayman Islands	32.2	36.4	25.5	5.9	900
Turks and Caicos	32.1	33.3	28.6	6.6	500
Mean					293,800
High	67.3	66.5	34.1	6.0	
Low	29.8	18.9	11.4	0.5	

Table 3: Proportional Distribution of Female Household Heads by Union Status, 1970

Territory	Married	Common-law	Visiting	No longer living with husband	No longer living with common-law partner	Never had husband or common-law partner	Total
Jamaica	28.8	17.0	6.3	20.2	26.2	1.6	104,100
Trinidad-Tobago	38.2	11.9	1.8	35.4	11.2	1.5	43,200
Guyana	33.1	8.8	2.3	44.4	10.8	0.7	24,800
Barbados	39.4	16.1	2.6	22.3	17.0	2.6	17,900
Belize	37.7	15.5	3.6	24.5	18.1	0.6	4,700
St. Lucia	37.6	16.2	7.5	20.7	17.3	0.7	6,400
Grenada	29.1	19.1	5.0	25.1	20.0	1.8	6,700
St. Vincent	34.4	21.1	8.4	10.7	23.0	2.4	5,500
Dominica	31.0	10.5	10.4	24.5	23.2	0.4	4,800
St. Kitts/Nevis	37.5	11.1	7.1	18.6	23.8	1.9	3,600
Montserrat	37.8	13.7	3.7	26.3	16.7	1.7	900
British Virgin Is.	43.2	9.7	5.8	18.9	21.2	1.2	500
Cayman Islands	59.5	9.3	0.7	24.5	4.5	1.6	700
Turks & Caicos	56.1	5.0	5.0	28.9	4.0	1.0	400
Mean	32.9	14.8	4.8	26.1	19.9	1.5	224,100
High	59.5	21.1	10.4	35.4	26.2	2.6	
Low	28.8	5.0	0.7	10.7	4.0	0.4	

Note: Discrepancies in totals between this and preceding table due to large number of union status 'not stated'.

Table 4: Proportional Distribution of Female and Male Household Heads by Educational Attainment, 1970

Territory	Male				Female			
	Primary	Secondary	University	Total	Primary	Secondary	University	Total
Jamaica	91.2	4.6	2.1	272,300	92.4	4.1	1.0	139,800
Trinidad-Tobago	83.4	11.0	3.0	138,100	89.2	7.4	1.1	50,900
Guyana	87.0	7.7	1.9	99,400	90.7	5.2	0.5	28,700
Barbados	36.5	58.9	3.6	32,900	47.5	51.0	0.7	24,800
Belize	91.3	4.9	2.7	17,200	93.8	4.1	1.1	5,700
St. Lucia	92.5	3.3	2.4	12,800	96.6	1.9	0.4	8,900
Grenada	90.5	5.6	2.5	10,400	95.5	3.1	0.3	8,600
St. Vincent	91.2	5.2	2.6	9,000	96.8	2.2	0.4	7,500
Dominica	92.2	4.1	2.5	8,700	96.0	2.6	0.5	6,400
St. Kitts/Nevis	89.0	4.2	3.5	5,900	93.8	3.1	0.8	5,100
Montserrat	86.5	5.9	6.0	1,800	96.1	1.9	1.3	1,400
British Virgin Is.	75.8	10.3	9.7	1,800	88.6	5.9	3.3	600
Cayman Islands	73.2	9.8	7.4	1,600	89.9	2.6	1.7	900
Turks & Caicos	82.2	6.4	9.4	700	93.2	3.5	2.0	500
Mean	85.7	9.5	2.4	612,800	88.3	8.6	0.6	289,800
High	92.5	58.9	9.7		96.8	51.0	3.3	
Low	36.5	3.3	1.9		47.5	1.9	0.3	

Note: Discrepancies in totals due to omission of small group 'other'.

Table 5: Proportion of Household Heads within and outside of the Labour Force, by sex, 1970

Territory	Proportion of Household Heads in the Labour Force		Proportion of Household Heads outside the Labour Force	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Jamaica	90.2	47.5	9.8	52.6
Trinidad-Tobago	88.5	33.1	11.6	66.9
Guyana	88.7	32.6	11.3	67.4
Barbados	85.0	46.8	15.0	53.2
Belize	93.3	28.9	6.7	71.1
St. Lucia	88.2	42.2	11.8	57.8
Grenada	89.5	46.9	10.5	53.2
St. Vincent	88.6	40.2	11.4	60.0
Dominica	88.0	45.5	12.0	54.6
St. Kitts/Nevis	86.8	42.4	13.2	57.6
Montserrat	83.4	36.6	16.6	63.4
British Virgin Is.	92.7	46.4	7.3	53.6
Cayman Islands	86.8	35.5	13.2	64.6
Turks & Caicos	87.4	35.9	12.6	64.1
Mean	89.2	42.4	10.8	57.6
High	93.3	47.5	16.6	71.1
Low	83.4	32.6	6.7	52.6

Table 6: Components of Estimated Labour Force of Male Household Heads, 1970

Territory	Worked	Seeking First Job	Other Seekers	Wanted Work and Available	Student	Total Labour Force
Jamaica	91.4	0.3	3.9	4.1	0.2	249,700
Trinidad-Tobago	91.1	1.1	6.9	0.7	0.2	124,400
Guyana	96.5	0.3	1.5	1.5	0.2	88,800
Barbados	98.4	0.1	0.7	0.6	0.1	28,300
Belize	98.2	0.2	0.8	0.6	0.1	16,200
St. Lucia	96.6	0.2	2.3	0.6	0.3	11,300
Grenada	98.2	0.3	0.9	0.5	0.1	9,500
St. Vincent	96.3	0.3	1.5	0.9	1.2	8,100
Dominica	98.6	0.2	0.7	0.3	0.2	7,700
St. Kitts/Nevis	97.7	0.5	0.8	0.7	0.4	5,100
Montserrat	96.2	0.0	1.2	2.3	0.4	1,500
British Virgin Is.	98.9	0.2	0.5	0.4	0.1	1,700
Cayman Islands	98.9	0.2	0.2	0.6	0.1	1,400
Turks & Caicos	95.8	0.6	2.9	0.3	0.5	700
Mean	93.2	0.5	3.7	2.4	0.2	554,400
High	98.9	1.1	6.9	4.1	1.2	
Low	91.1	0.0	0.2	0.3	0.1	

Table 7: Components of Estimated Labour Force of Female Household Heads, 1970

Territory	Worked	Seeking First Job	Other Seekers	Wanted Work and Available	Student	Total Labour Force
Jamaica	84.3	1.0	5.4	8.3	0.9	67,100
Trinidad-Tobago	92.5	1.3	5.1	0.8	0.4	17,200
Guyana	95.2	1.0	1.3	1.5	0.9	9,400
Barbados	97.3	0.2	1.0	1.3	0.2	11,700
Belize	98.5	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.5	1,600
St. Lucia	94.5	0.7	3.5	0.7	0.7	3,700
Grenada	96.8	0.8	1.6	0.8	0.1	4,100
St. Vincent	96.5	0.5	1.7	1.2	0.1	3,100
Dominica	97.1	0.4	1.4	0.8	0.3	2,900
St. Kitts/Nevis	96.3	1.0	1.1	0.7	1.0	2,200
Montserrat	94.3	0.0	2.3	3.1	0.4	500
British Virgin Is.	95.3	0.7	0.4	2.9	0.7	300
Cayman Islands	98.1	1.0	0.0	0.3	0.7	300
Turks & Caicos	97.8	0.5	1.6	0.0	0.0	200
Mean	89.3	0.9	4.1	5.0	0.7	124,400
High	98.5	1.3	5.4	8.3	1.0	
Low	84.3	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	

Table 8: Proportional Distribution of Household Heads by Major Occupational Groups, Females 1970

Territory	Professional and Technical	Administrative and Executive	Clerical	Sales	Service	Agri-culture	Produc-tion	Other	Total
Jamaica	7.6	0.2	7.3	15.3	36.0	12.1	15.4	6.1	58,500
Trinidad-Tobago	10.3	0.5	8.7	12.2	36.3	13.9	12.4	5.6	16,200
Guyana	13.2	0.3	6.2	15.5	36.6	16.8	8.8	2.7	9,200
Barbados	5.0	0.4	4.1	16.3	40.2	22.0	8.2	3.8	11,700
Belize	14.0	0.3	4.9	10.2	45.8	8.1	15.2	1.5	1,700
St. Lucia	5.0	0.4	5.1	15.3	20.0	38.9	12.0	3.4	3,600
Grenada	4.1	0.3	3.4	9.5	20.2	45.0	14.1	3.3	4,000
St. Vincent	5.1	0.1	3.5	9.4	22.7	29.4	14.0	15.8	3,000
Dominica	5.2	0.2	3.5	12.0	22.5	40.7	9.5	6.2	2,900
St. Kitts/Nevis	7.3	0.2	4.1	11.3	30.4	38.9	6.0	1.8	2,100
Montserrat	7.1	0.6	4.5	9.6	37.1	33.8	6.1	1.2	500
British Virgin Is.	9.6	1.9	8.4	13.8	58.6	3.1	3.5	1.2	300
Cayman Islands	7.8	1.3	9.5	11.1	59.6	0.3	7.2	3.3	300
Turks & Caicos	12.6	0.6	5.5	9.9	35.7	19.2	13.2	3.3	200
Mean	7.9	0.3	6.6	14.3	34.9	17.4	13.1	5.4	128,400
High	14.0	1.9	9.5	16.3	59.6	45.0	15.4	15.8	
Low	5.0	0.1	3.4	9.4	20.0	0.3	3.5	1.2	

Table 9: Proportional Distribution of Household Heads by Major Occupational Groups, Males, 1970

Territory	Professional and Technical	Administrative and Executive	Clerical	Sales	Services	Agri-culture	Produc-tion	Other	Total
Jamaica	4.4	1.1	2.9	5.2	5.2	43.3	27.9	10.0	232,100
Trinidad-Tobago	7.5	2.0	6.1	7.8	7.1	19.2	40.1	10.2	115,500
Guyana	6.6	1.3	5.0	5.7	6.9	35.4	28.2	10.9	87,400
Barbados	9.3	3.3	4.3	6.9	9.7	18.8	38.1	9.7	27,900
Belize	4.9	0.8	3.8	7.0	5.1	41.9	26.2	10.3	15,900
St. Lucia	3.8	1.5	2.6	3.6	3.9	51.8	29.0	3.7	11,000
Grenada	5.8	1.3	3.5	5.4	5.7	41.7	32.4	4.2	9,300
St. Vincent	4.5	1.7	2.7	6.5	5.0	37.5	29.2	13.0	7,800
Dominica	3.7	1.4	2.5	3.0	3.4	55.9	22.8	7.3	7,600
St. Kitts/Nevis	4.9	1.9	3.4	5.9	5.4	42.3	28.7	7.6	5,000
Montserrat	8.1	2.5	2.9	5.9	7.5	28.1	42.8	2.3	1,500
British Virgin Is.	10.7	5.3	3.1	4.0	7.5	14.1	48.0	7.4	1,700
Cayman Islands	14.9	5.7	3.1	6.8	8.1	7.7	43.4	10.5	1,400
Turks & Caicos	11.9	3.0	4.7	4.9	13.2	14.6	44.5	3.3	600
Mean	5.8	1.5	4.1	6.0	6.1	35.3	31.4	9.9	510,600
High	14.9	5.7	6.1	7.8	13.2	55.9	48.0	13.0	
Low	3.7	0.8	2.5	3.0	3.4	7.7	22.8	2.3	

Table 10: Female Proportion in Occupational Groups of Household Heads, 1970

Territory	Professional and Technical	Administrative and Executive	Clerical	Sales	Services	Agriculture	Production	Other
Jamaica	.3029	.0497	.3842	.4250	.8374	.0658	.1224	.1343
Trinidad-Tobago	.1619	.0363	.1675	.1801	.4174	.0922	.0416	.0720
Guyana	.1750	.0287	.1152	.2248	.3585	.0477	.0318	.0258
Barbados	.1844	.0472	.2846	.4976	.6331	.3289	.0823	.1396
Belize	.2341	.0365	.1228	.1357	.4928	.0204	.0591	.0150
St. Lucia	.2983	.0765	.3919	.5801	.6239	.1969	.1190	.2305
Grenada	.2355	.0902	.2925	.4347	.6030	.3178	.1581	.2510
St. Vincent	.3030	.0226	.3302	.3574	.6373	.2305	.1556	.3177
Dominica	.3480	.0614	.3517	.6035	.7159	.2172	.1366	.2452
St. Kitts/Nevis	.3875	.0404	.3386	.4481	.7057	.2801	.0816	.0929
Montserrat	.2278	.0732	.3433	.8596	.4345	.2886	.0458	.1500
British Virgin Is.	.1214	.052[illegible]	.2973	.3495	.5464	.0324	.0109	.0233
Cayman Islands	.1048	.0482	.4085	.2677	.6224	.0093	.0355	.0649
Turks & Caicos	.2323	.0500	.7500	.3673	.4362	.2734	.0779	.2222
Mean	.2296	.0427	.2596	.3434	.5542	.0970	.0834	.1066
High	.3875	.0902	.7500	.8596	.7159	.3289	.1581	.3177
Low	.1048	.0226	.1152	.1357	.3585	.0093	.0109	.0150

Table 11: Day Care Facilities in Barbados and the Eastern Caribbean

Territory	Day Nurseries		Pre-Schools	Total
	Government	Private	Government/Private	
Barbados	15*	n.a.	-	15
St. Lucia	3	4	-	7
Grenada	2	8	-	10
St. Vincent	5	-	-	5
Dominica	1	1	20	22
Antigua	8	-	1	9
St. Kitts/Nevis	1	-	1	2
Montserrat	2	-	-	2
Total	37	13	22	72

Note: Day nurseries cater to children under 3; Pre-schools cater to children aged 3-5.

*Including pre-schools.

[1]A shortened version of this paper was presented at the International Meeting of Experts on "Research on the Status of Women, Development and Population Trends, Evaluation and Prospects", UNESCO, Paris, 25-28 November 1980. The study was made possible through a grant from UNESCO.

[2]Conversely, between 36 per cent and 54 per cent of units were simple family households or childless co-residential units, implying that households characterized by the absence of a male were not necessarily the norm.

[3]In contrast to the census definition, this study characterizes a visiting union by the existence of a steady sexual relationship between partners, the maintenance of separate households and the lack of legal sanction of the union. Most women in such unions lived in households consisting of themselves and their children, i.e. they were female heads of household [Roberts and Sinclair 43].

[4]For studies in which specific reference is made to female household headship as distinct from the issue of matrifocality, see especially Cumper [12], Horowitz [23], Otterbein [39], R.T. Smith [47], Wilson [57]. For a detailed listing of studies on the West Indian family see Massiah [32].

[5]This pilot study took the form of a pre-test in which a questionnaire designed to elicit information centring around the themes emotional support, sources of livelihood, power and authority, was administered to a test group of 28 respondents. The focus of the study was not on female household headship but on the role of women generally. Relevant data from the 10 women who claim to be household heads are utilized in this paper.

[6]The range is from 6.0 per cent in the Turks and Caicos Islands to 0.5 per cent in St. Lucia.

[7]These definitions were retained for the 1970 and 1980 censuses.

[8]Figures in the two studies vary somewhat since the Buvinic study [9] excludes single person households. Because a large proportion of such households relate to women aged 65+, who therefore represent a specific welfare problem, the Massiah study [30] includes them.

[9]These proportions are based on females who head households, excluding 23.9 per cent for whom union status was not stated. If this group is included, the proportions in the union categories decrease but the ordering remains the same.

[10]For discussion on the applicability of labour force concepts in the context of the Caribbean see Roberts [42].

[11]This index is shown in the last column of Table 1.

[12]No data are available in respect of industry, employment status and hours worked. Data to analyse income differentials are available for both the general population and heads of household. However, the published tabulations combine the categories 'not stated' and 'none' which together account for over half of all workers, in some cases over 60 per cent. The data are therefore considered suspect and have not been analysed.

[13]Brodber uses the term yard to describe a geo-social entity 'A kind of residential arrangement for low income Kingstonians' in which women and children form stable units while men drift in and out as the woman's circumstances change. Residential units may be rented either from the government (government yards) or from private individuals (tenant yards) [7 p.9].

[14]This is known in Jamaica as 'throwing a partner'.

[15]These conditions are contained in *Laws of Barbados* National Assistance Act 1969-37, Cap. 48.

[16]Assistance provided by the welfare department in compiling these case studies is gratefully acknowledged.

[17]*Laws of Barbados*. Married Women (Separation and Maintenance) Amendment Act, 1977-4.

References

[1] ANTROBUS, Peggy, "Promoting and Accelerating Women's Participation in Developing Programmes in the Caribbean through TCDC", Paper prepared for UNDP High-level Meeting on the Review of TCDC, January 1981.

[2] BARBADOS, National Insurance Board, *Report on the National Insurance and Social Security Scheme for the period January 1, 1974 - December 31, 1974*, Mimeo. n.d.

[3] BROWN, Susan, "Love unites them and hunger separates them: Poor Women in the Dominican Republic" in Reiter, R. (ed.), *Toward an Anthropology of Women*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975.

[4] _____, "Lower Economic Sector Female Mating Problems in the Dominican Republic: A Comparative Analysis" in Rohrlich-Leavitt, R. (ed.), *Women Cross Culturally: Change and Challenge*, The Hague: Mouton, 1975.

[5] BOULDING, E., et al., *Handbook of International Data on Women*, New York: Wiley, 1976.

[6] BRANA-SHUTE, Rosemary, "Women, Clubs and Politics: the case of a lower-class neighbourhood in Paramaribo, Surinam", *Urban Anthropology*, Vol. 5, No. 2, 1976.

[7] BRODBER, Erna, *A Study of Yards in the City of Kingston*, ISER Working Paper No. 9, Kingston, Jamaica: ISER, UWI, 1975.

[8] BUVINIĆ, M. and YOUSSEF, N., "Households headed by women in Third World Countries: an Overview", paper presented to ICRW Conference "Women in Poverty: What do we know", Belmont Conference Centre, Elkridge, Maryland: 30 April to 2 May, 1978.

[9] _____, et al., *Women Headed Households: the Ignored Factor in Development Planning*, Washington, D.C.: International Centre for Research on Women, 1978.

[10] CHERNICK, S.E., *The Commonwealth Caribbean: The Integration Experience*, Baltimore: Published for the World Bank by Johns Hopkins Press, 1978.

[11] COLE, Joyce, "Occupational Choice of fifth form students in Trinidad and Tobago", *Bulletin of Eastern Caribbean Affairs*, Vol. 3, Nos. 5 and 6, 1977.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

[12] CUMPER, G.E., "The Jamaican Family: Village and Estate", *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1958.

[13] CUMPER, Gloria, *Survey of Social Legislation in Jamaica*, Kingston: ISER, UWI, 1972.

[14] DIRKS, R., "Networks, groups and adaptation in an Afro-Caribbean Community", *Man*, Vol. 7, No. 4, 1972.

[15] DUNCAN, O.D. and DUNCAN, B., "Residential distribution and occupational stratification", *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. 60, No. 5, 1955.

[16] FORDE, Norma, "Divorce", Barbados, National Commission on the Status of Women, *Report*, Vol. 2, Bridgetown: Ministry of the Attorney General, 1978.

[17] _____, "Maintenance", Barbados, NCSW, *Report*, Vol. 2, Bridgetown: Ministry of the Attorney General, 1978.

[18] GREAT BRITAIN, Committee on One-Parent Families, *Report*, Vols. I & II, Cmnd. 5629, London: HMSO, 1974.

[19] GREENFIELD, S., "Dominance, focality and the characterisation of domestic groups: Some reflections on 'matrifocality' in the Caribbean", in Gerber, S.N. (ed.), *The Family in the Caribbean*, Rio Piedras: University of Puerto Rico, Institute of Caribbean Studies, 1973.

[20] GROSS, E., "Plus ça change...? The sexual structure of occupations over time", *Social Problems*, 16, Fall 1968.

[21] HARRIS, Olivia, "Households and household heads: A critique of the domestic mode of production", Resource Paper sent to IDS/CEREP Seminar on "Women and Social Production in the Caribbean", San Juan 23 June - 25 July 1980.

[22] HIGMAN, B.W., "The Slave Family and Household in the British West Indies, 1800-1834", *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, Vol. 6, No. 2, Autumn, 1975.

[23] HOROWITZ, Michael M., *Morne Paysan: Peasant Village in Martinique*, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967.

[24] JACKSON, Jean, "Stresses affecting Women and their Families", Women in the Caribbean Project, Volume 2, *Women and the Family*, Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1982.

[25] KOUSSOUDJI, Sherrie and MUELLER, Eva, "The Economic and Demographic Status of Female Headed Households in Rural Botswana", (mimeo), n.d.

[26] LADNER, Joyce, *Tomorrow's Tomorrow: the Black Woman*, New York: Doubleday, 1971.

[27] LASLETT, P., *Household and Family in Past Time*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

[28] MCEADDY, Beverley Johnson, "Women who head families: a socio-economic analysis", *Monthly Labor Review*, Vol. 99, No. 6, 1976.

[29] _____, "Women who head families, 1970-1977: their numbers rose, income lagged", *Monthly Labor Review*, Vol. 101, No. 2, 1978.

[30] MASSIAH, Joycelin, "Indicators of Women in Development: a Preliminary Framework for the Caribbean", Women in the Caribbean Project, Volume 6, *Women, Work and Development*, Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1982.

[31] _____, "Women in Barbados: Some Demographic Aspects of their Employment", Barbados National Commission on the Status of Women, *Report: Vol. I:* Bridgetown. Ministry of the Attorney General, 1978.

[32] _____, *Women in the Caribbean: An Annotated Bibliography*, Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1979.

[33] MERRICK, T.W. and SCHMINK, Marianne, "Households Headed by Women and Urban Poverty in Brazil", Paper presented to ICRW Conference, "Women in Poverty: What do we know", Belmont Conference Centre, Elkridge, Maryland: 30 April - 2 May, 1978.

[34] MOORE, Kristin and SAWHILL, Isabel, "Implications of Women's Employment for Home and Family Life", Paper prepared for the American Assembly Volume on *Women in the American Economy*, August 1975.

[35] MOSES, Yolande, "Female Status and Male Dominance in Montserrat, West Indies", Ph.D Thesis, University of California, Riverside, 1976.

[36] _____, "Female Status, the Family and Male Dominance in a West Indian Community", *Signs*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1977.

[37] NEWLAND, Kathleen, *The Sisterhood of Man*, New York: Norton and Co., 1979.

[38] NIEVES, Isabel, "Household Arrangements and Multiple Jobs in San Salvador", *Signs*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 1979.

[39] OTTERBEIN, K, "The Family Organisation of the Andros Islanders: A Case Study of the Mating System and Household Composition of a Community in the Bahama Islands", Ph.D Thesis, University of Pittsburgh, 1963.

[40] POWELL, Dorian, "Women in the Caribbean Family", Women in the Caribbean Project, Cave Hill, Barbados: Institute of Social and Economic Research, UWI, 1980.

[41] ROBERTS, G.W, "A Life Table for a West Indian Slave Population", *Population Studies*, Vol. 5, No. 3, 1952.

[42] _____, "The Working Force of the Commonwealth Caribbean at 1970", Paper prepared for Seminar on Manpower Planning, Caribbean Development Bank, Grenada, April 1974.

[43] ROBERTS, G.W. and SINCLAIR, Sonja A. *Women in Jamaica: Patterns of Reproduction*, New York: KTO Press, 1978.

[44] SAFA, Helen Icken, "The female-based household in public housing: a case study in Puerto Rico", *Human Organisation*, Vol. 24, No. 2, 1965.

[45] SAWHILL, Isabel, "Discrimination and Poverty among Women who head Families" in Blaxall, Martha and Reagan, Barbara (eds.), *Women and the Workplace*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976.

[46] SMITH, M.G, "Education and occupational choice in Jamaica", *Social and Economic Studies*, Volume 9, No. 3, 1960.

[47] SMITH, R.T, *The Negro Family in British Guiana: Family Structure and Social Status in the Villages*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956.

[48] _____, "The Nuclear Family in Afro-American Kinship", *Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1970.

[49] STACK, Carol, "The Kindred of Viola Jackson: Residence and Family Organisation of an Urban Black American Family" in Whitten, N.E. and Szwed, J.F. (eds.), *Afro-American Anthropology: Contemporary Perspectives*, New York: The Free Press, London: Collier-Macmillan, 1972.

[50] _____, "Sex Roles and Survival Strategies in an Urban Black Community" in Rosaldo, M.Z. and Lamphere, Louise (eds.), *Woman, Culture and Society*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974.

[51] STEIN, R.L., "The economic status of families headed by women", *Monthly Labor Review*, Vol. 93, No. 12, 1970.

[52] TANNER, Nancy, "Matrifocality in Indonesia and Africa among Black Americans" in Rosaldo, M.Z. and Lamphere, Louise (eds.), *Woman, Culture and Society*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1974.

[53] Trinidad and Tobago: Central Statistical Office, *Eastern Caribbean Region Population Census 1960, Vol. I, Part A: Administrative Report*, Port of Spain, 1967.

[54] United Nations Secretariat, "Sex Based Stereotypes, Sex Biases and National Data Systems", ST/ESA/STAT/99 (mimeo), June 1980.

[55] WEEKES, Hildegarde, "One-parent families with special reference to women's roles therein", Barbados, National Commission on the Status of Women, *Report: Vol. II*, Bridgetown: Ministry of the Attorney General, 1978.

[56] WILSON, P.J., "Caribbean crews: peer groups and male society", *Caribbean Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1971.

[57] _____, "Household and Family in Providencia", *Social and Economic Studies*, Vol. 10, No. 4, 1961.

Principal Sources of Financial Assistance Available in Barbados

National Insurance Benefits

Sickness Benefit: This benefit is payable to an insured person who is incapable of work through illness. To qualify, an insured person

(a) must have been insured for not less than 13 weeks;

(b) (i) must have been employed at the time he/she became ill; or

(ii) must have not less than 39 contributions paid or credited to his account in the contribution year in which he/she became ill;

(c) must have paid at least 8 contributions in the 13 weeks immediately before the week in which he/she became ill.

(d) must produce satisfactory evidence of incapacity for work.

The rate of benefit payments varies with the level of weekly earnings and the associated weekly contribution rates. According to the most recently available annual report, that of 1974, women constituted exactly one-half of all claimants for sickness benefit [Barbados 2]. However, it is not possible to identify what proportion of the sickness benefit payments went to female claimants.

Maternity Benefit: This benefit is available for specified periods during the pregnancy or confinement of an insured woman and is payable provided that the claimant has paid 20 contributions in the 30 contribution weeks prior to the expected date of confinement.

In 1974, a total of Bds$470,844 was paid in maternity benefits to 1,598 claimants, representing $295 per woman for an average of 74 benefit days or approximately $4 per day [Barbados 2].

Invalidity Benefit: This is offered as a periodical payment to insured persons permanently incapable of work. For most of the period under which the act has been in operation, high blood pressure and its effects on arthritis have been the major contributors to invalidity.

Payments of this benefit increased from Bds$14,000 in 1970 to $96,000 in 1974. During the latter year grants were paid to eight men and three women, while pensions were paid to 53 men and 46 women. Virtually two-thirds of these claimants were aged between 60 and 64 [Barbados 2].

Old Age Contributory Benefit is payable to an insured person who has reached pensionable age. Of the 965 claims allowed in 1974, 633 or 66 per cent were males and 332 or 34 per cent were females [Barbados 2].

Survivors' Benefit: This is payable to a widow and children under 16 years of an insured person who dies other than by way of employment injury. Where the deceased was a national insurance pensioner or had title to a pension, a pension is payable to his eligible survivors. Where he had title to an invalidity or old age grant, the payment takes the form of a lump sum grant. Pensions are payable for life to widows who are 55 years of age or over and who had been married for three years or more at the time of the husband's death. For other widows, the payment is limited to one year, unless they are invalids in which case payments continue for the duration of the invalidity. Similarly, eligible children receive their payments until their sixteenth birthday, except in the case of invalids who continue to receive their payments beyond age 16.

As with all other benefits, the rate of payment depends on the insured person's insurance record. Thus there is no standard weekly rate as prevails elsewhere. It is, however, noteworthy that of the 116 surviving spouses who received benefits during 1974, three-quarters were over the age of 50 [Barbados 2]. Thus they were probably receiving additional sources of income. For example, if the widow is a retired worker, she would be receiving an old age contributory benefit from the national insurance scheme and perhaps a pension from her former employer. Further, her deceased husband may have made provisions for her in his will through life insurance and/or other bequests. On the whole, therefore, the widow who heads a household is likely to be better off than a never-married woman who heads a household.

Other Benefits: Other benefits payable under the national insurance scheme include a funeral grant payable on the death of an insured person and employment injury benefit payable to an insured person for injury or disablement suffered as a result of an injury sustained at the workplace.

Tax Allowances

Under the existing income tax regulations, men and women are treated similarly if they are single persons. Individuals may claim personal allowances as follows:

1.	Married person whose partner has no income	$3,000
2.	Single Person or Working Spouse	1,600
3.	Child Allowance	
	(i) under 11 years	400 each
	(ii) between 11 and 16 years educated in Barbados	500 "
	(iii) over 16 years educated in Barbados	600 "
	(iv) over 16 years educated abroad	1,000 "
4.	Incapacitated dependent relative not exceeding two income allowances	500
5.	Other dependent	500
6.	Housekeeper	500
7.	Life Insurance Premiums	
	(i) Self	1,500
	(ii) Child under 18 - not exceeding	500
8.	Medical Expenses	
	(i) Self	150
	(ii) Children	75 each

A number of other allowances on such things as registered retirement plan, covenants, mortgage payments, house maintenance and repair expenses are also allowed. For a woman who heads a household to benefit from these and all other allowances, she must have regular employment and must be earning an income of over $6,000 annually. The number of women who fall into this income bracket is probably quite low.

Tax Credits

Under the tax credit scheme recently introduced, persons whose gross income is under $6,000 are credited with an amount equivalent to the tax they would be required to pay on their taxable income. In practice this

means that persons with an annual gross income of less than $6,000 do not pay income tax. This applies equally to single and married persons regardless of sex. Many income earning women who head households and who fall into this income bracket can benefit from this scheme.

Other Benefits

A number of other social service benefits are available to the population at large, all of which can and do provide help to women who head households. These include the following:

Educational Grants of $100 are available to each child who gains a place in a recognized secondary school on the basis of the common entrance (11+) examinations. These grants continue on an annual basis for the duration of the child's secondary school career.

School/University Fees - all places at government secondary schools and the regional University of the West Indies are provided free of charge.

School Meals are provided at all primary schools, milk being included at the nursery schools.

Text Books are provided free of charge at all primary and government secondary schools.

Medical Attention in the form of physical, dental and optical examination and treatment are provided for all school children, mostly free of charge, but in some cases subject to a test of income. Additionally, adults are eligible for free health care at all the available government health clinics.

Old Age Pension is available to all persons aged 65 and over at the rate of $20 per week. Such persons also receive clothing and food, if necessary, and have their electricity bills and water rates paid by the government.

National Assistance

In Barbados, national assistance is available to all needy persons under the National Assistance Act (1969-37, Cap. 48), the regulations made thereunder in 1969 and subsequent Amendment Regulations. The National Assistance Act provides for the establishment of a National Assistance Board. The Board is, among other things,

responsible for advising the Minister on the provision of assistance to able-bodied persons, or to their families, who are in need. According to one of the studies prepared for the National Commission on the Status of Women, of 72 cases receiving assistance in two parishes of the island (1 rural, 1 urban) in 1976, 60 originated from women and of these, 55 were solely responsible for their households [Weekes 55]. Further, of the 60 women only 5 lived in a married union. Among the remainder 43 were single, 7 were separated from their husbands and 5 were widowed. The extent to which women who head households rely on national assistance is therefore clearly brought into focus.

SIX CASE STUDIES - WELFARE RECIPIENTS

(The following accounts are based on actual cases but fictitious names are used for obvious reasons)

Simple Family Household: Woman, Common-Law Partner and her Children

Case I: Vashti was 30 years old when she first applied for assistance in 1970. At the time her marital status was single, but she lived in a common-law union with the father of four of her five children. The father of her eldest child had emigrated and she received no support from him for his child. The father of the other children was occasionally employed as a 'lorry hand' during which periods he contributed $25 per week. Vashti herself was unemployed, with no prospects of employment. All of her children were at school. She applied for monetary assistance and educational assistance for the children. She was granted school uniforms for two of the children and $5 per week.

Three years later, Vashti made her second application. By this time she had two more children and one baby who had just died. She requested and was granted funds to bury the baby.

In 1979, Vashti had returned to the department. During the interval she had two more children - a total of nine - and her common law partner had just been sentenced to prison for 4½ years. She had been occasionally employed as an agricultural labourer but was then unemployed. She requested financial assistance and was granted $15 per week. Two months later she requested assistance for the children and received school uniforms.

Case II: Eudine, aged 28, first applied in 1974. At that time her marital status was single but she lived in a common-law union with the father of her three children. During her last pregnancy she resigned from her job in a garment factory and she was still unemployed. Her partner made and sold souvenirs during the tourist season, thus his financial contribution to the household was limited. The household consisted of Eudine, her common-law partner, their children and his mother. Her first request was for financial assistance which she received.

By the next year, Eudine's partner had obtained a job as a chauffeur which paid $30 per week. Eudine requested and received school uniforms and shoes for the children. Four months later she requested a mattress and received both bed and mattress.

In 1976 and 1977 educational assistance was again granted. By 1978 when Eudine's case was reviewed, it appeared that her circumstances had improved. The couple had married and both of them were working. The financial assistance provided over the years was therefore terminated.

By 1979 Eudine had re-applied. By this time she had had a fourth child, but her husband had suffered a stroke and the prognosis was that he would be unlikely ever to work again. Eudine's wage as a domestic of $60 per week was unable to cover the family's expenses. Financial assistance was received and school uniforms provided for the children.

Truncated Simple Family Household: Woman and her Children

Case III: Joan was 33 years old when she first applied for assistance in 1977. Separated from her husband for three years, Joan was the mother of six children. The father of the first had migrated, the father of the other five, her husband, was an outpatient of the mental hospital and therefore unable to offer any contribution. She was unemployed. The household consisted of Joan, her six children and her common-law partner who had asked her to move from his house. She requested financial assistance for the children and was granted $12.50 plus emergency supplies of a bed and mattress, stove, chairs, linen, cooking utensils, crockery, cutlery and foodstuff. Within six months she applied for and received school uniforms for the children and again in 1978.

In 1979, Joan was injured in a vehicular accident and applied for disability aid, which she received - $8 per week. Later in the year, she made two further applications, one for educational assistance, another for bed linen. Both were granted.

In March 1980, Joan applied for a food voucher, which was granted, and in April for a stove and oven. That also was granted.

Over a period of three years, for the whole of which time she was entirely responsible for herself and her children, Joan was forced to seek welfare assistance on seven occasions.

Case IV: Daphne first applied in 1974 at the age of 29. She was separated from her husband and had five children. The father of the first child offered no assistance, while her husband, the father of the remaining four children, was currently serving time in prison for refusing to support his children. The household consisted of Daphne and her five children who lived in a house for which the rental was $12.50 per week. On her first application, she requested financial assistance for herself and children and received $12.50 for the children and school uniforms for her eldest child.

Between 1974 and 1979, Daphne had made six other applications all of which, except that for housing, were granted. The request for housing is still pending. During the period Daphne's husband was released from prison but up to two years ago could not be located.

Laterally Extended Family Household: Woman and her Children, her Sister and her Children

Case V: Nesta was 27 years old on her first application in 1975. Her marital status was single; she was not in a residential union. She had seven children for five men of whom two gave no assistance, one was unemployed, one was dead and one gave $5 per week for his child. Nesta normally worked as a domestic but opted to remain at home to care the children. The household consisted of Nesta and her seven children and Pearly, Nesta's sister and her eight children. Pearly was also unemployed. The main source of financial assistance came from the father of Pearly's children, who was not resident in the household, and the sisters' mother who worked as a domestic and who was also not resident in the household. On her first application Nesta requested financial assistance for the two children whose father was dead. She received $15 per week for six of the seven children - the one whose father supported it being excluded.

Within four months Nesta made her second application, this time for clothing and shoes for five of the children. This was granted. Similar requests were made and granted in 1976, 1977, 1978 and 1979. In reviewing this case in 1978, the officer noted Nesta's disinterested attitude to seeking employment, and complaints from Pearly and their mother about Nesta's attitude (by this time Pearly was working).

Over a period of four years Nesta made seven applications, all of which were approved.

Woman, her Children and her Brother's Children

Case VI: Mabel first applied in 1974 when she was 25 years old. She was single, not in a union and had three children, the father of whom was deceased. She had previously been employed as an electronic assembler but had been laid off two months previously. The household consisted of Mabel, her three children and Mabel's sister who paid the rent. Mabel requested and received financial assistance - $5 per week. In 1975 and 1976 she applied for educational assistance for the children and received school uniforms. An application for a mattress and sheets was apparently turned down.

In 1977, Mabel's household increased. Her brother had killed his wife, who had four children for him, and was sentenced to life imprisonment. Mabel offered to care three of the brother's children. Her next three applications - 1977, 1978 and 1979 - were therefore in respect of educational assistance for six children, her three and her brother's three. All six children were provided with school uniforms and, on the last occasion, financial assistance.

DORIAN L. POWELL

NETWORK ANALYSIS: A SUGGESTED MODEL FOR THE STUDY OF WOMEN AND THE FAMILY IN THE CARIBBEAN

Introduction

The concept 'network' has appeared for a long time in the social science literature but has been used mainly in a metaphorical sense. Its analytical usage emerged in the early 1950s with the works of Barnes [3] and Bott [11], who undoubtedly were the first theorists to systematically use the network approach. Following that period, there was a considerable time lapse until the 1960s, when there appeared new stimulus for network analysis. This has been accountable in part to a noted paradigmatic shift by social scientists away from structural-functional analysis [Boissevain 10 pp. 392-4]. This arose largely out of a dissatisfaction with the constraints imposed by that approach and the need for a theoretical framework that could more adequately handle complex social relations and in particular, aspects of social change. The rapidly increasing use of network analysis in diverse areas seems a clear indicator of the value that has been placed on the new analytical models made possible by the network paradigm.

Today, network analysis has developed into quite a distinctive theoretical perspective. It focuses on informal relationships, in contrast to the usual emphasis of an institutional approach to the study of social relations. As explained by Boissevain [10 pp.392-4], "By charting, for example, a person's network of intimates or the network activated by an action set or that of a politician mobilizing votes, network analysis moves beyond the tradition of limiting analysis to discrete institutional spheres". He continues, "Basically, network analysis is very simple: it asks questions about who is linked to whom, the nature of that linkage and how the nature of the linkage affects behaviour". As such the notion of social network in its most frequent usage refers to a set of social relations which link distinct social entities to one another. Interest centres around the patterns formed by social entities, the linkages and the interdependence between them. Further, network analysis has an interest in the content of social relationships between social entities. Entities are not necessarily confined to people, but could be applied as well to organizations or other social forms. "It is an analytical instrument which views circles of relatives and friends,

coalitions, groups and business houses, industrial complexes, and even nation-states as scatterings of points connected by lines that form networks. The points are of course the units of analysis, the lines social relations." [Boissevain 10].

Most network analysts study the personal or egocentric networks. Here, the network is conceptually 'anchored' on an individual or a sample of focal individuals from whom all or a set of contacts may be traced. Those with whom the focal individual is in direct contact are referred to as his first-order contacts [Barnes 4]. Those to whom the focal individual has access through his first-order contacts are his second-order contacts. It is possible to further trace indirect contacts to higher-order levels. Analysts tend to place much interest in first-order contacts - those with whom the focal individual is usually close. But increasingly, interest is also directed at more distant contacts. Direct and indirect contacts are of differential importance in explaining aspects of social behaviour. While this is recognized, a problem rests with the methodological feasibility of exploring contacts widely dispersed. The question of manageability and research strategies to facilitate the gathering of network data has been receiving the attention of several analysts in the field [See Sanjek 25].

An array of concepts has been generated in respect to the study of social networks. There is as yet no consensus on the use of these concepts. However, the frequency of use is no doubt indicative of some measure of convergence around some of these concepts. The discussion which follows looks at some of the most frequently used concepts and the contexts in which they have been used.

Social Network Characteristics: Structure and Content

An important first step in the study of an individual's personal social network is to collect the kind of data that will enable the construction of a sort of map or blueprint of the social network. It is from this that it becomes possible to systematically study its structural parameters. A first consideration is the network size, that is, the number of contacts in the network. The strategy for studying the network will vary according to its size. The kind of analysis that would be possible in small networks may not be practical with larger ones [Barnes 5].

As mentioned earlier, in the study of personal networks, one person is selected as the focus of analysis, from whom all network contacts are traced. Contacts known directly to the focal individual include members of his household, kin relations, friends, neighbours and others in or out of his immediate community. The number of such persons is likely to be large, even if consideration is given only to the direct contacts. The network will be significantly larger when indirect contacts are included as well. Social network size has implications with respect to social access. The number of persons known directly or indirectly by the focal individual represents potential access to a number of sources, which could be simply information, or it could be access to goods and services. The fact that the contacts exist means that the possibility exists for ego to activate them if the need arises. The individual without such contacts would first have to recruit contacts, a process which might take so much longer than activating a contact which already exists. Studies in the field of health, in particular, have found important relationships between the size of one's social network and health characteristics. Berkman and Syme [6] found that mortality rates were consistently lower for people with many social contacts than for those with few contacts. Of course while size of networks gives an indication of potential access, in the final analysis the quality of these relationships will be the more crucial factor.

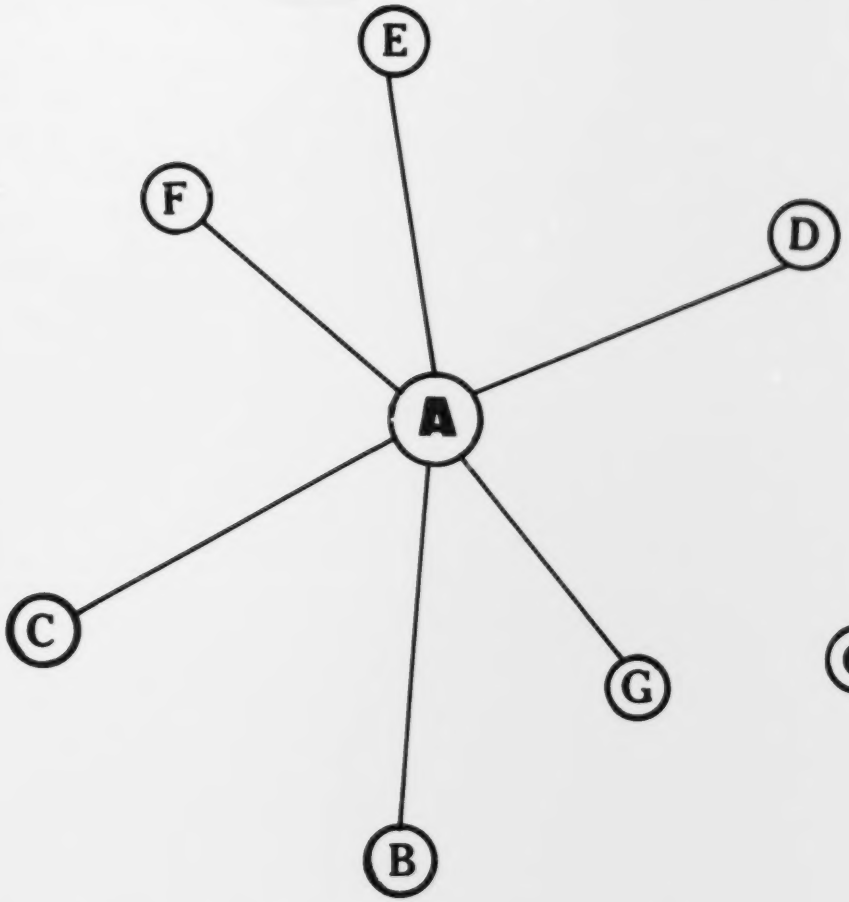
An important element in the structural analysis of social networks, is not only to recognize the number of contacts or links which ego has, but further to recognize the relations between these links and how such relations influence the behaviour of ego. The analyst therefore looks at how the contacts themselves are connected to

each other. In network analysis this feature has been referred to as network density or network connectedness and seems undoubtedly to be the most important structural characteristic of social networks. It has been defined by Bott [11 p.59] as "the extent to which the people known by a family, know and meet one another independently of the family". Bott studied 20 London families and used 'connectedness' in social networks to explain conjugal role relations in these families. In this study she used married couples as the focus of analysis. Her findings revealed that the degree of segregation of conjugal roles is related to the degree of network connectedness, so that, "those families that had a high degree of segregation in the role-relationships of husband and wife had a highly connected network; many of their friends, neighbours, and relatives knew one another" [11 p.59].

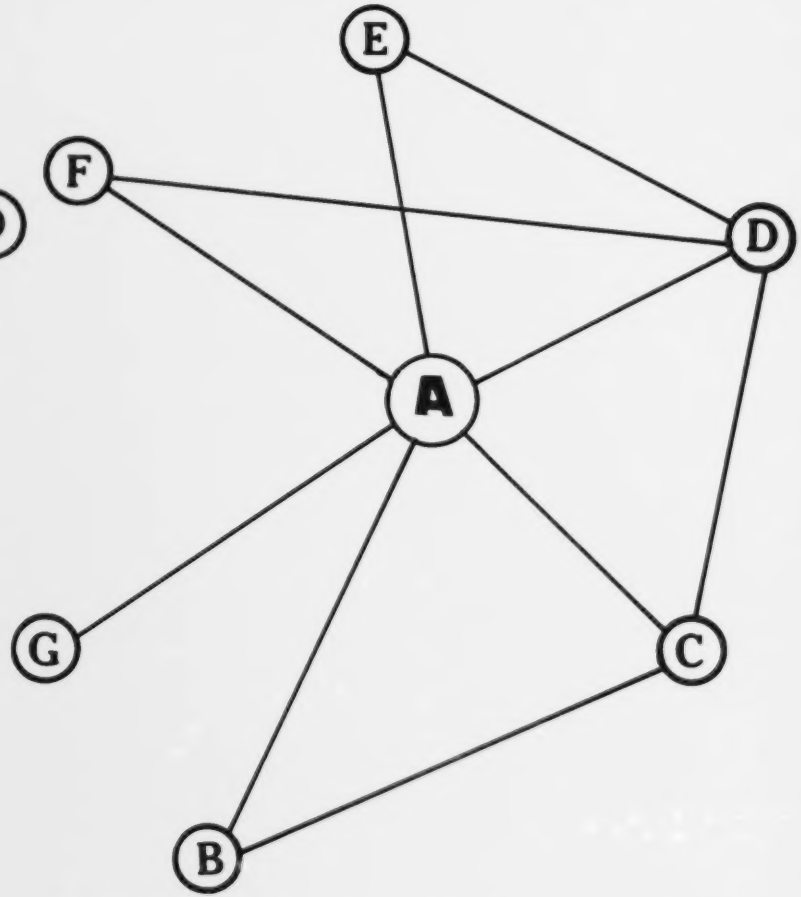
Barnes defines density as "the number of links actually existing between a set of members of the network, expressed as a proportion of the maximum possible number of links" [Barnes 4 pp.61-4]. Figure I, adapted from his work, illustrates the point. In (a) there is ego, designated A, in relations with six persons, B to G, known as A's first order contacts. The maximum number of possible links between the set inclusive of A is 21. However as shown in (b) only 10 out of the possible 21 links actually exist. So that the density would be calculated as 1000/21 equal to 48 per cent [Barnes 4 p.64].

Using this approach, social networks have been described in terms of high and low density. Densely linked networks (called close-knit by Bott) are sometimes referred to in the literature as cliques or clusters. This has been the focus of several studies of friendship networks which have utilized the socio-gram to depict the connectedness of those persons defined as friends [Festinger et al.14].

In a specific type of social network, notably support networks, it has been found that the functions served by networks differ according to level of density. Hammer in her work on network relations and health noted the implications of different types of network structures. It is no doubt with this in mind that she urges for studies which go beyond the study of close personal networks to the further direct and even indirect (less dense) social networks [Hammer 18].



(a) First Order Contacts



(b) First Order Contacts with density of 48%

FIGURE 1: Density of Network

Source: Adapted from Barnes [4].

The notion of density of social networks also has implications for the more macro issue of social class. Individuals in highly dense personal networks who interact frequently with each other, that is, close and dense networks, usually regard each other as equals. In the loose and more extended networks, there may be some accommodation for gradation of social status [Epstein 13]. If this is so, then social networks may be important as a means of perpetuating social differentiation in social relationships and an important tool for the analysis of social class.

From another perspective, the network approach can be applied to the study of resource allocation. Walker [32] confirmed that network resources are inequitably distributed according to class. The implication is that if individuals of common class position are locked together in personal networks, network resources will continually reflect social class differentials. Small, high density networks may be inimical to the expansion of network resources. On the other hand, such networks may be better able to conserve what they already have.

While density is a useful structural variable, it can be misleading if not used along with other measures that take network size into consideration. Social networks with distinctly different structural forms can have similar density values. The probability of interconnections varies according to the size of the network, so that density as a summary measure may mask the differentials in structure between small and large networks [Wellman 33]. It is suggested that the number of clusters (tightly connected sets) is a useful measure to supplement the density value [33]. This is also supported by Hammer [17] who argues that cluster and cross-cluster measures may be more sensitive structural measures than overall network density. She found this to be specifically applicable to the study of schizophrenic patients, for whom, it has been found, the size of the network is not significantly smaller than for normal individuals [Tolsdorf 30]

Another characteristic of social network is that referred to as multiplexity. Some analysts treat multiplexity as a structural variable, while others treat it as an aspect of network content. My preference is to use it in the latter.

Multiplex or multiple-stranded relationships are those in which the focal individual is linked to a single individual in more than one type of role relationship. For example, A knows B as a co-worker, a fellow member of the social club, and as fellow tenant in the same apartment building. In this way A has a three-stranded relationship with B. The contrasting type of relationship is termed uniplex, or a link with one focus of interaction [Mitchell 21]. The notion of multiplexity has varying implications. Perhaps the most common assumption is that multiplex relationships are likely to be stronger and more durable than uniplex relationships. If network contacts are valued for their strength and the amount of resources they control, then it is likely that individuals, particularly those in search of supportive relationships, will much quicker activate their multi-stranded links than those with single strands. Studies which measure precisely the amount of supportive resources which flow through ties and strands are, however, quite rare [Wellman 33]. The characteristic of strength usually assigned to multiplex relationships do not, however, rule out the fact that a single-stranded relationship can also be strong and intense.

Two other content characteristics relate to the strength of network ties. These are reciprocity in social relationships and symmetry. While multiplexity refers to the number of exchange contents in a relationship, reciprocity refers to whether or not a transaction between ego and his contact is oriented from ego to contact as well as from contact to ego. This feature of relationships, sometimes referred to as 'directedness', has been found to be a salient feature of sociometric studies. In the study of friendships, this content characteristic adds balance to the relationship. Both reciprocity and symmetry are dimensions of the strength of a relationship. Symmetry, however, refers to much more than direction. It speaks specifically to the question of equivalence between ego and his contact. Symmetry and reciprocity as aspects of network relations have important implications. They relate very much to the power dynamics of the relationships between individuals. On a broader level they have status implications for network members. One expects that in 'close' personal social networks, relationships are likely to be more symmetrical and reciprocal, than relationships with more extended contacts.

Social Networks as Social Support Systems

An important dimension of the study of social networks is the role that they play in helping individuals to cope with life's eventualities. This dimension has become increasingly popular as the network approach is used to study what is frequently referred to as social support systems. The assumption which links social network with social support states simply that network ties act as sources of support from which needed resources flow to the focal individual. Support services vary according to the structure of the network and the content of its relationships. Network ties may not always be supportive. They can at times be quite constraining on the individual's behaviour. Studies of social networks may be designed to distinguish between supportive and non-supportive network ties. In this way it is not assumed that all network ties are supportive. [Wellman 33 p. 13] argues against an approach which looks only for supportive ties. As he puts it, "First, it distorts the content of ties by narrowing them to their supportive elements. Second, it distorts the structure of social networks by wrenching these ties out of the larger networks in which they are embedded and which give them meaning." He suggests that support can best be treated as a variable that may or may not occur. An analysis of the circumstances under which network ties will or will not be supportive then provides a much more powerful analytic model than treating support as a given.

The study of social support it seems should be treated as one dimension of the role of social networks in the lives of individuals. On the one hand, they may play a significant and positive part in the process by which individuals cope with problems or deal with crises situations. On the other, the social networks may themselves be the creators of some of these problems and crises. With these two perspectives in mind, the task is to secure the empirical evidence to determine the kind of network structures and content which are likely to play one role or the other.

Hammer [17] in discussing social supports and schizophrenia argues for an approach which focuses on social connections rather than support per se. In this way one would focus on 'structural' variables, meaning "variables defined in terms of patterns of connections (networks) rather than the content or quality of relationships" [p. 48]. Hammer speaks of the importance of structurally supported connections, that is structures

in which a given pair of individuals may have a number of common connections. Such connections tend to be more durable over time, so that as long as that structure is intact, there is always the possibility that support could be forthcoming from such connections. An understanding of the structural properties of the social connections of individuals, for example mentally ill patients, can guide health practitioners in planning intervention programmes, even in the absence of information on the nature of relationships between the connected individuals.

The content variables, for example multiplexity, reciprocity and symmetry give added information. In the context of social support they indicate the nature of the resource flow that is likely to exist with certain network connections.

In the study of social support it is of interest to determine who are recruited for what kinds of supports, and what are the situations which set off the search for network contacts. Several studies indicate the involvement of women in networks and the varied exchange transactions in which they become involved as they devise strategies for survival in critical social and economic conditions [Stack 29, Sidel 26, Aschenbrenner 1].

As mentioned earlier, social networks are not always supportive. They can sometimes even form barriers to access to certain types of resources. For example, individuals locked into 'close' networks tend to have limited access to possible information from more widely dispersed contacts. Further, networks can serve to block support from more formal institutional sources. Indeed, for a clear understanding of networks as social support systems it is necessary to recognize their relationship to more formal systems as well as the broader social structure within which both are embedded.

Social Networks and the Caribbean Family

The literature on the West Indian family has provided us with much evidence that West Indian women are indeed embedded in social networks. Though the material emerging from these studies was not collected in terms of the network approach, nor was network terminology used, it is possible to highlight aspects of this data in order to demonstrate the potential of the network approach to the study of West Indian women. The material used relates to three works, R.T. Smith, *The Negro Family in British Guiana*, Edith Clarke, *My Mother who Fathered Me* and Hyman Rodman, *Lower Class Families in the Culture of Poverty in Negro Trinidad*.

Smith's study covered three Guyanese communities; Clarke's, three in Jamaica; and Rodman's, one in Trinidad. While they may differ in terms of the criteria used for selecting communities, they have some commonalities. The communities are all primarily rural, though in the case of Guyana and Jamaica, one community each had come under modest urban influence. The studies all relate to black West Indians.

The Structure of Kinship Relations

With respect to the British Guiana communities, Smith stated, "If we view the total kinship system as a network of ties extending over the village community it will be an irregular network with gaps here and there, but within it one will be able to discern a regular motif where the ties of a woman, her daughters and their children are more closely knit than any other relationships" [Smith 27 p.160]. Kin networks, it appears, were extensive though not uniformly so in the three communities studied. The main characteristic was wide lateral extension, though the networks in Better Hope were much more contained than the other two villages. This might be due to the fact that Better Hope came under some urban influence, being nearer to Georgetown, the capital.

Community organization no doubt sets certain limits to other aspects of social organization and structure "...Each village is a close-packed community ... households are not spatially isolated as in many peasant communities" [27 p.151]. No wonder therefore that it was not easy to determine where kinship ended and where the local community began. The Guyanese in these communities regarded almost everyone as 'all one family' and used the neutral term 'coz' (cousin) as common reference. Smith noted, "it (coz) designates the point at which local

relations and kin relations become fused and cease to be differentiated and hence it is a position of structural importance" [p.157]. He further stated that "'all one family',... is merely a recognition that any person can trace a multitude of ties to other members of the village ..."[p.164].

The 'openness' of the kinship system was also remarked on by Rodman [24 p.101] in his study of the family in a Trinidad village. As he expressed it, "the central structural fact in Coconut Village is the extreme degree to which the kinship system is 'open' - nuclear family relationships flow readily into kinship relationships and community relationships without any sharp breaks. There is no doubt that the fluidity is exceptional ..."

Edith Clarke's report on her Jamaica communities was somewhat different. Her communities were selected to represent three different types of social organization. She selected a peasant community, Mocca; one in which the sugar estate dominated community life, that is, Sugartown; and the third, Orange Grove, a community most affected by some measure of modernization. Clarke's description of the structural conditions which obtained in the communities she studied, for example, limited training and employment opportunities, would lead one to feel that active kinship links would be a feature of life for the residents of these areas. Certainly an important basis for the maintenance of such links would be the traditional form of land tenure which obtained, particularly the practices which prevailed and related to what has been known culturally as 'family land'. This system of land ownership which existed and still persists in Jamaica is based on joint inheritance by 'all the children' of a deceased owner. In its operation it has been in conflict with the system of inheritance based on English Law which has always been practiced on the island. As regards the system based on family land, certain specific norms govern use and transmission of such land. The role that the system plays was succinctly put by Clarke [12 p. 63]:

> The system of family land and joint inheritance by all the children may be regarded from the functional point of view as a conservative force, ensuring that the inheritance is kept intact and contributing also to family cohesion and solidarity. Joint occupation and use not only keep the kinship group together but link the individual members of the family in a series of repetitive activities which of necessity call for cooperation and mutual adjustment.

The picture which emerges of Caribbean family structure is that the kinship relationships were open and flowed into non-kin relationships. This was particularly so in the case of the British Guiana and Trinidad communities. In Jamaica the relationships depicted seem to be more bounded, with the system of family land having served to keep kinship relations quite cohesive.

In all the areas discussed, women and children appeared to be at the core of effective kinship networks. More specifically in Mocca and Orange Grove (Jamaica) kinship relations had an integrative influence. In Sugartown (Jamaica) such influence was weak; the sugar-dependent population was too mobile for the establishment of lasting ties. The evidence suggests, however, that in the absence of strong kinship links in this village, non-kin links developed. In the cases of the British Guiana and Trinidad communities, one would expect to find combinations of both kin and non-kin members in social networks. So that there could have been evidence of what is called 'fictive' kin, that is, a situation in which relationships with non-kin become so strong, the parties involved treat each other as real kin relatives. In the case of the Jamaica communities one expects that cleavages between kin and non-kin would be sharp. In communities organized off the order of Mocca and Orange Grove there is likely to be stronger kin networks, while in the sugar-dependent type communities, non-kin networks may be more predominant.

Content of Social Relations

Supportive transactions have emerged as a strong feature of interpersonal relationships within the Caribbean family systems described. Reciprocity is a strong element in such transactions though it is not always balanced. For example, refreshments would be given in exchange for assistance with farming. In respect of male to male reciprocities there seemed to have been more balance in the kind of service that was exchanged. A man was expected at some time in the future to return service comparable to what was extended to him. In the case of male to female transactions, this element of balanced exchange did not seem to exist. Further discussion of three areas of social support now follows.

Housebuilding: Housebuilding was a cooperative affair. As stated by Clarke, "It was the custom to erect the framework and do the wattling of the sides and the thatching of the roofs with the assistance of friends" [p. 183].

In Mocca, this practice was referred to as 'matches', in Sugartown as 'partnership' and in Orange Grove as 'sport'. A common principle obtained in all three areas. The owner of the house provided food and drink in exchange for house-building assistance. No cash was involved in the exchange.

Agricultural Activities: For agricultural activities the co-operative venture was called 'morning sport' (Orange Grove, Jamaica). It brought together a team of 'carefully selected friends' to assist the farmer in working the land. The events were specially arranged, aimed at accomplishing a specific amount of work in a relatively short time. As in the case of housebuilding, reciprocity was normative, with refreshments in exchange for service. Again no cash exchange was involved. Clarke noted that in the case of a woman farmer, men would offer 'morning sport' to her without any expectation of reciprocity. This service was usually extended to a woman farmer who was 'living alone or without an adult male help' [p.184].

In the case of British Guiana, one gets the impression that the kind of cooperative labour reported on above did not obtain. According to Smith [27 p. 31], " ..there is practically no cooperative activity involved...there is very little development of a system of reciprocal kinship obligations, and although ties of kinship or friendship may be invoked as the basis for reciprocal help, the main mechanism operates through the medium of monetary exchange". This is in direct contrast to the Jamaican situation where peasant groups rely on cooperative-no money arrangements chiefly with friends, to assist them in two major activities, housebuilding and farming.

Child-rearing: The practice in the West Indies of sharing the child-rearing responsibilities and of involvement in informal 'adoption' arrangements, has been commented on by West Indian writers. More recently the phenomenon has been commented on by Roberts and Sinclair [23 p. 161] as follows:

> A feature of the West Indian family is the frequency with which women, especially those not formally married, have their children cared for by one of their relatives or by members of some other household. While there are arrangements for institutionalising

> such situations through adoption and fostering, the shifts of children to households other than their parents' usually take place outside of such institutional forms.

On the basis of their sample of women, they estimated that about 30 per cent of women in the childbearing age had had some of their children brought up in this way. More than half of these children were placed with maternal grandmothers.

From the sources under review, Clarke outlined at least two forms of non-kin 'adoptions'. In the first, a mother because of poverty may 'give away' her child to strangers. The 'adopter' may be motivated by childlessness. The second form is primarily a business arrangement. The child is given to someone usually of 'higher social standing' as a 'school-boy' or 'schoolgirl'. As Clarke stated, "the child is fed, clothed and theoretically, sent to school or taught to earn his or her living in exchange for services" [p. 176]. The two types of exchanges involve the children in different role relationships with their adopters. In the first the adopted is in the role of 'own child' and is treated as a member of the family. In the second the role is that of a worker in the household. Most so-called adoption, Clarke noted, however, "was between kin, and where this was the case there was little, if any, difference in treatment from their own child" [p. 177].

The child-shifting phenomenon was also observed by Rodman [24 p. 101]: "A woman may turn her children's care over to her mother, sister or another female relative or friend". The motivations as reported seemed to be mainly economic, as women experienced difficult times due to non-support from the fathers of their children.

Smith identified the practice in British Guiana as well. The situation as reported seemed confined to mutual exchanges between female siblings. Death or serious trouble of the mother of the child had been identified as one reason for such transactions.

The Jamaican practice just described points to a peculiar form of exchange relationship. The direction goes from the mother of the child to the adopted parent.

However, to complete the exchange, reciprocity works indirectly through service to the child. In the second form outlined by Clarke, the 'school-girl' or 'school-boy' is involved in the exchange relationship as well. Service is expected in return for food, shelter, etc. The relationships are clearly asymmetrical and one would imagine that the ties are of the extended type.

What we observe here is a system of exchange of individuals, mainly an aspect of kin relations than of non-kin. The practice seems undoubtedly an outstanding feature of the support system of Caribbean families. One could expect that these exchanges would contribute to keeping active links between kin members or, more broadly, between the individuals involved in the transaction. It would be of interest to determine to what extent this is so, and to what extent differences between the strength of ties of kin and non-kin exchanges are evident. Other relevant questions are, do exchanges of individuals result in more durable ties than exchanges of non-human goods and services? What is the strength of ties when what is involved in the resource flow is a child?

Other Types of Cooperation: There is no doubt that the system of family land mentioned earlier is an important basis for the formation and maintenance of kin networks. There are several identifiable areas of reciprocity and cooperation based on that system. "Agreement must be reached in regard to living accommodation; sharing of the economic trees planted by the ancestors; ...There is the continual 'borrowing' and lending that is so much a part of the pattern of Jamaican life and the ideas of hospitality". Joint inheritance and the principle of inalienability characteristic of family land practices, ensured contact with family members in other parts of the island or in other countries: "When the crops are reaped baskets of food-stuffs are sent from the home cultivation to these relatives working in Kingston or elsewhere, and in return those who can reciprocate with small sums of money or gifts of clothing" [p.64]. According to the cultural practice, 'family land' cannot be sold. If an inheritor migrates from the area, no matter how long he remains away the right to return and occupy remains alive. This feature results in the maintenance of kinship links. The above exchanges suggest this. Family land also makes possible a kind of settlement pattern on the basis of kin, that

tends to keep kin relations in close proximity to each other, no doubt involving relatives in 'close' reciprocal relationships. This may however have implications for the recruitment of other types of contacts.

Summary

The foregoing material serves to illustrate the existence of social relationships in terms of kinship links and to a lesser extent friendship links. It is noted that women feature very much in what may be interpreted as kinship networks. It was not possible to describe in network terms the structure of social networks, but some inferences were made. Kinship networks are likely to be large, with women occupying structurally central positions.

Network relationships are likely to be largely supportive and exchange content is likely to be quite varied.

The family land phenomenon in the case of Jamaica suggests the existence of a cultural basis for the perpetuation of kinship connections through which resources can flow. The principle of inalienability institutionalizes such connections, and could indeed create a situation of distant but strong ties for those who have for long periods migrated from their homelands.

The social transactions which characterize exchange relations as we have seen, are varied. Contacts are mobilized to assist in farming, housebuilding, accommodation, for sharing fruits from the 'family land', and for child-rearing assistance. These exchanges indicate quite clearly the level of interdependence and cooperation that defines the system of interpersonal relationships in these communities.

A Social Network Model

In recent years, a considerable amount of interest has been focused on what has often been referred to as the female-headed family or female-headed household. The model presented here centres on this group of women. For this specific purpose a female headed unit refers to one in which a woman has *de facto* responsibility, involving financial costs and other needs for the members of the unit, and in which there is no resident male sexual partner. Further, for this specific purpose a woman who has become head as a result of the death of her husband or partner will be excluded from the definition of female family head.

Female-headed families have been identified as prevalent among lower class groups, mainly blacks, in the United States and are also strongly present in Latin America and the Caribbean. In the latter, it has been estimated that approximately one-third of all families are headed by women.

Perhaps the most prevalent view of their emergence is that men tend to quit their families when because of poor and unstable economic conditions they are unable to effectively perform the provider role, a role culturally prescribed for them. Men caught in this position tend to remain marginal to their families and sooner or later abandon these families altogether. This argument has been used to explain the prevalence of female-headed families among mainly lower class groups in the Caribbean. As men desert, women assume headship and take on the responsibility for the support of their children. This view was put forward by Smith [26] in accounting for the high incidence of mother-headed families among poor blacks in British Guiana. While Smith recognized the relevance of the economic and social class situation, he also placed emphasis on the psychological dimension, expressed in men's feeling of marginality, and their subsequent departure from the family.

Blumberg et al.[9 p.108] favour an expansion of the structural approach, stating that

> We must systematically treat the relation of the mother to the economic sector and the impact of this relation on her children as responsibilities at different stages of the family cycle. This may give us some of the 'missing

> links to account for the origin of mother-headed families in certain groups. But in order to account for their persistence a second new element is necessary: a thorough analysis of the role of the larger political economy in maintaining the structural concomitants of mother-headed families in a given group.

Blumberg et al. went on to outline certain conditions under which she believes that mother-headed families emerge and persist. Important among these is the condition in which "the political economy of society produces and profits from a surplus labour population", and "the female-headed family unit successfully reproduces the surplus labour population to the benefit of those who control the political economy" [p.110]. Female-headed families are likely to emerge and persist where there are opportunities for women to participate in the subsistence economy. In this view, the prevalence of the female-headed family is linked to the economic role of women and their relationship to the factors of production and to the extent to which the mother-child unit serves the interest of the larger political economy.

Winch [35] dealing with the same issue, argues that it is impossible for a woman alone to simultaneously care and support small children. Drawing attention to the condition of New World blacks, he indeed seemed convinced about this. Studies have shown that black women are embedded in sharing relationships in social networks which assist them in coping with family responsibilities [Stack 29]. Blumberg observed, however, that the reason that women turn to others for help arises out of poverty much more than out of difficulties in combining parenting and economic activities. How much this holds in the case of West Indian societies is an empirical question. Reports have been made of extensive social exchanges between women involved in shifting of children between families [Clarke 12, Rodman 24, Roberts and Sinclair 23]. The prevalence of this practice has been noted, but there has been no focused study of the practice and the factors which give rise to it.

In a society where there is no welfare system, it can be expected that there will be involvement in kin and friendship networks generated by poverty. The social network approach which is argued for here, will facilitate the identification of supportive ties and the kinds of

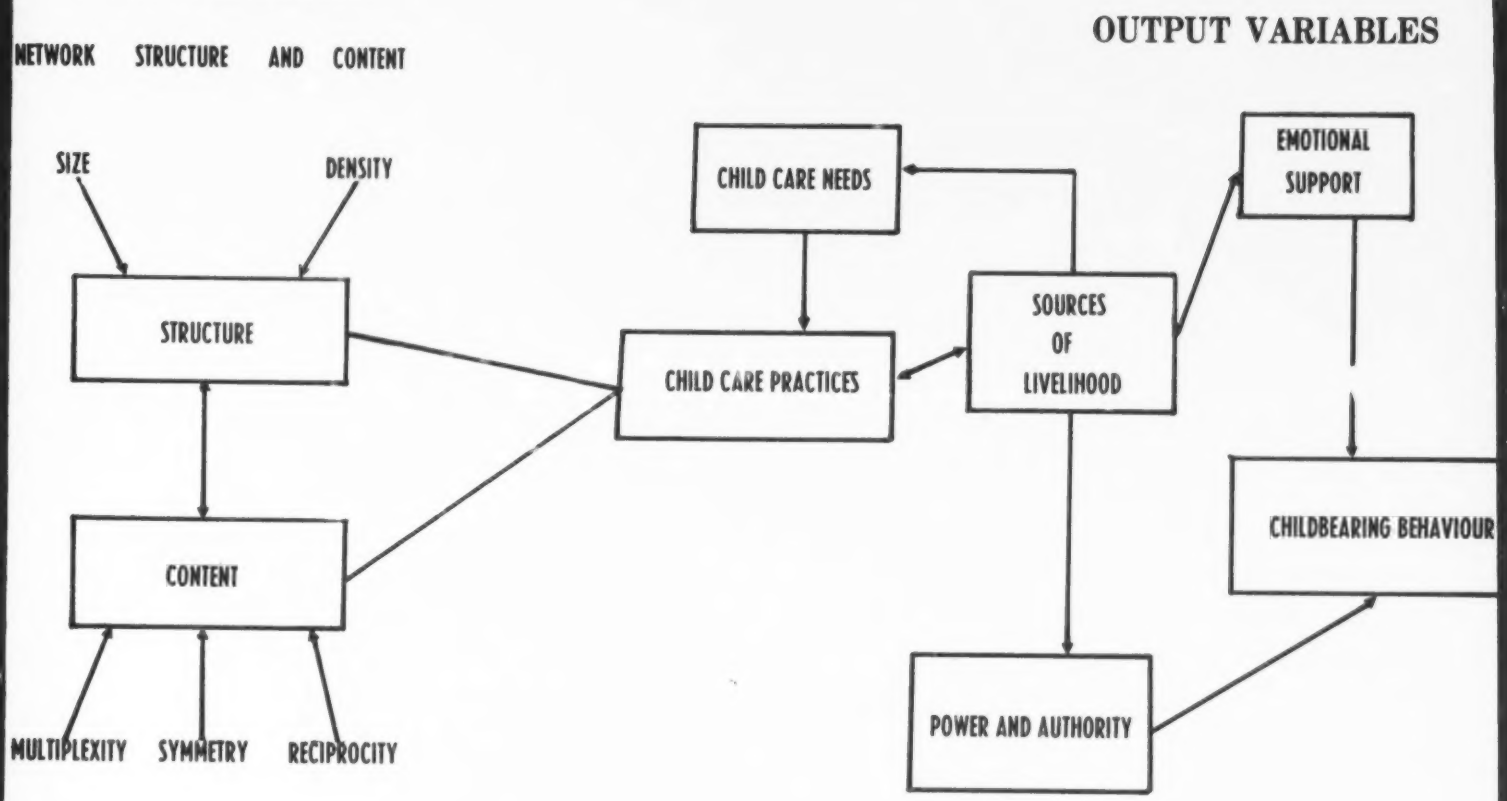


FIGURE II: A Tentative Model for the Study of Social Networks and Women's Working and Childbearing Behaviour.

resources which flow between them. It will be useful also to identify those ties which are not supportive and the conditions which make them so.

The rest of the paper outlines a model (Figure 2) that could be applied to the study of the social networks of a group of women with dependent children and who are heads of their own families. Specifically, the model seeks to identify:

1. The structural and content characteristics of the social networks in which the women may be involved.

2. The specific functions that social networks perform.

3. The implications of these relationships for other areas of women's lives, for example, child-bearing behaviour.

Two structural variables,namely, size and density and three content variables: multiplexity, reciprocity and symmetry, have been highlighted as the main independent variables. Size gives an indication of potential access to other contacts, goods and services etc., and density indicates the connectedness of network contacts. Multiplexity informs us of the extent to which several types of transactions may be combined within a single tie, reciprocity relates to the exchange content of the relationship between links, and symmetry deals with the question of balance in relationships.

Three principal areas of interaction are treated in the model. They are referred to as Sources of Livelihood, Emotional Support, and Power and Authority. These are three themes which form the conceptual framework for the Women in the Caribbean Research Project. This paper is a part of the efforts of this larger project. A brief conceptualization of these themes now follow. Refined operationalization of them will have to await the testing of the model, though some tentative suggestions will be made at this time.

Sources of Livelihood: 'Sources of Livelihood' in conceptual terms speaks to the economic resources of women. It goes beyond the participation of women in market-oriented labour and the conventional 'labour force' concept of work. As labour force is customarily defined, it comprises, "all persons of either sex who furnish the supply of labour available for the production of economic goods and services" [UN 31 p. 3]. There are at least three problems with this concept, with specific reference to women. The most fundamental is that the concept automatically excludes a large proportion of women - 'housewives' - from the economically active. While discussion of this will not be pursued here, it must be noted that reservations have been made with respect to this narrow view of what is defined as economic activity.

Labour force statistics are also likely to underrepresent women who combine mother and worker roles. They are likely to select work that enhances the compatibility of the two roles. Such work is most likely to be in the informal sector, unreliable and unpredictable and as such definable as strategies for survival. These are likely to be diverse and with flexible work schedules. They may not therefore be easily captured in labour force surveys. Family-based enterprises which many women may find convenient are also vulnerable as work likely to be omitted from conventional labour force surveys.

The concept 'Sources of Livelihood', briefly stated, is concerned with access to social rewards - goods and services - and to the institutional and non-institutional options available to women as members of the society.

A more precise treatment of the concept can transpose it into a continuous variable, using degree of flexibility of working conditions as reference.

First level classification is characterized by work in which the conditions are *highly inflexible* and in which the workers (women) have little or no power over their work schedules. These are likely to be found in the formal economic sector and to a much lesser extent in the informal economic sector. The second level is represented by a *moderately flexible* work schedule. In this the worker may have some indirect influence in the definition of work schedules, for example, jobs of the task work type whereby women are paid according to a

rigidly measured output. In this sense a woman could decide the minimum amount she would like to earn in any one week, and so can plan her family and other responsibilities to fit into this schedule. The idea is that she is free to pre-plan just how much time she would want to give her work outside the home. This second level is likely to be located in the formal economic sector. The final level includes activities in which women are in effective control of their hours of work. Schedules are *flexible*. Such activities could include what is termed own-account workers, some of whom may be in the formal economic sector, but the majority are likely to be in the informal sector. In this final type, the woman has relative freedom in setting her hours and place of work.

Emotional Support: Here emotional support is used from a problem-solving perspective.

Evidence has shown that women tend to have a disproportionate amount of child care and other responsibilities which have to be managed quite often with very limited resources. This is just one area of many which might generate stressful conditions with which women have to cope. Some women respond by going into a state of depression and developing feelings of anxiety. This may not, however, be peculiar to women, as males also may fall into such states. But custom usually demands that women dispense emotional solace not only to men but to children for whom traditionally they have been assigned primary responsibility. On this score it could be argued that women more than men are likely to frequently feel the need for emotional support. The concept used here is meant to identify all those sources which serve to help women to cope at the psychological levels with problems they encounter. Such support could be in the form of a listening ear, a consoling word or any other gesture that brings some measure of emotional satisfaction to women. It does not limit emotional support as necessarily something coming from someone else to the woman. It could be something that she herself has experienced, for example, becoming a mother.

Operationalizing this concept could be based on women's subjective rating of satisfaction from a particular relationship or experience.

Power and Authority: In the Weberian sense, power is the "probability that one actor within a social relationship will be in a position to carry out his will despite resistance". Stated in another way, power is ascribed "to those who can influence others even against their will" [Gerth and Mills 15 p. 156]. In this sense, power involves a clear acceptance of the 'powerful' or the effect of coercion, hence, obedience. In Weber's formulations, authority would be the more appropriate concept, that is, "the probability that a command with a given specific content will be obeyed by a given group of persons" [34 p.]. This Weber refers to as legitimate power, power vested in a social position, rather than in the individual - a 'pure' power model. This latter is hardly ever used except in rigidly authoritarian settings, so that in actual situations a synthesis of force (coercion) and authority is what constitutes power [Bierstedt 7]. As Bierstedt states, "Power is the ability to employ force, not its actual employment" [p. 148].

Power so conceived limits its use to formal power. In the study of women, its use of necessity must be expanded to embrace not only authority and power conferred on women through established social institutions but authority and power created by women themselves.

An important element of this expanded perspective is control, particularly control over one's life. It is believed that this is the essence of female power. The freedom to make decisions with regard to one's self and to carry out these decisions is the *sine qua non* of power. This level of power, of course, will be related to or facilitated by other types of power, for example one's control of money income, land or other forms of highly valued resources, but the ultimate power is control over one's self. This is embodied in the concept of 'autonomy' an important dimension of 'power and authority' as it is here conceived.

The distinction we make here is between institutional and personal power, a distinction that is very important for our later consideration of women's involvement in exchange relationships. In such relationships the power to influence is of critical importance. For many women the source of such influence (power) may not necessarily be a formal institutional office, but may be derived from their role in informal settings and through their own efforts.

Linkages Between Variables

The argument put forward by the model is that women may interact in social networks with respect to a number of areas. Three broad areas of interaction have been identified, namely Sources of Livelihood (SOL), Emotional Support (ES) and Power and Authority(PAA). Within each of these broad areas other sub-areas may be identified. (See Appendix 1). The structure and content of the network will vary according to the area/sub-area of interaction which is most prominent in the women's lives. Existing literature has already identified exchanges relating to child-rearing practices as a dominant feature of West Indian family life. The model is based on the assumption that the ready availability of child-rearing assistance from social networks serves as an incentive towards early and continued child bearing among West Indian women. Social networks serve as a buffer against the effects of early parenthood (teenage childbearing), and remain as social support systems for women throughout the rest of the childbearing period. It is hypothesized therefore that women's childbearing will vary in terms of the nature of their interaction in social networks.

Network interaction in the area of child-rearing will depend on how child care needs are felt and defined. Child care needs are expected to vary according to worker status and the kinds of working conditions with which women have to comply. Based on the conceptualization of sources of livelihood suggested earlier, women in inflexible work settings will be more likely than those in flexible settings to be engaged in social network transactions which involve child-care support. The assumption is that the flexibility of work, makes work compatible with child-caring responsibilities, which in turn will influence childbearing behaviour. For women in inflexible work settings network support relieves them of child-caring responsibilities, so they can be involved in work outside the home. However, if network support also results in making it easier to combine worker and childbearing roles, then there may be no difference in the childbearing behaviour of women in flexible or inflexible work settings. However, if the rewards from work provide satisfaction (emotional support) which out-weigh the satisfaction experienced from childbearing, then involvement in work will have the expected inverse relationship, despite the support flowing from network contacts.

The model goes further and posits that women's involvement in economic activity (SOL) also influences women's power. This could include power of decision-making with respect to contraceptive use, which in turn influences women's childbearing behaviour.

The network parameters include size and density as structural variables, and a number of content variables, including multiplexity, symmetry, reciprocity among others.

Network size and network density describe network pattern and as such they have probabilistic value. With specific reference to network support, certain support possibilities will tend to be associated with certain network patterns. A totally interconnected network, that is, one in which the ties are all structurally supported, is likely to be more durable and more dependable than a network in which most or all of its ties are not structurally supported.

Earlier we spoke of multistranded relationships, termed here multiplexity in the model. This refers to the situation in which several types of relationships may be concentrated in one network tie. In the case of women with limited resources, multi-stranded relationships, if they fill a supportive function, would be much more beneficial than single-stranded relationships. Hirsch [19] found that low density, multidimensional natural support systems were more associated with successful adaptation to life change stress than alternative structural and content forms. Multidimensional ties are usually associated with strength and greater capacity for support. A multiplex relationship is likely to be a strong relationship. While as such it may work positively for ego, by its very strength it can also act to constrain ego's access to needed resources. Its overall effect on ego could be more significant than similar impact from a relationship with a narrower range of content, for example, a uniplex relationship.

Again looking at the relationship between structure and content, density is related to both reciprocity and symmetry. In a high density and close network, relationships are likely to be reciprocal and symmetrical, as network contacts tend more to be equals. Reciprocity and symmetry are also related to types of support. For example, in relationships from which ego gets emotional support, ties may be more reciprocal and symmetrical,

while in those in which support is in terms of material needs, like cash or kind, the relationships may be less egalitarian.

The position is that different structural and content forms make possible different kinds of network functions. Some network ties will facilitate the flow of resources while others will not. Some supportive ties will be quite specialized, for example providing only emotional support; others may provide both material and emotional support.

The model is a very tentative one which has not yet been tested. It does not claim to have included all the relevant or the most important variables. The directions of relationships indicated by the arrows are not necessarily the only direction in which the relationship exists. As we well know, quite often there may be an agreement on the existence of a relationship but much less agreement on its direction. What the model attempts to do is highlight selected variables and their possible linkages with certain ideas concerning women, networks and family. The plausibility of the assumptions made must now be tested and the model refined.

One has no doubt that social network relationships are operative among West Indian women. What we do not know is: what are their distinctive features, what are the conditions which stimulate the recruitment of network members and cause them to be activated? What functions are served by social networks and in what way do different groups of women participate in them? These are just some of the questions that can be explored through the use of the suggested model. In its present form it is tentative and it is only by repeated testing that the necessary refinements can be accomplished.

Brief Methodological Considerations

An important consideration in the process of network analysis is the eliciting and recording of network data. While it is not possible to treat this in detail in this paper, it is useful to mention briefly some points relating to this aspect of the process. Once it has been decided that the study will deal with personal networks, then at least three important decisions must be made early. First, will the study seek to identify direct contacts only, or both direct and indirect?

Second, will any of ego's contacts be interviewed? Third, will the study include observation of behaviour, as well as interviews?

With respect to the first question, it is certainly much easier to handle direct contacts only, but doing so might deprive us of information on important relationships that ego may have with distant contacts. Friends of friends may indeed have important impact on ego's interaction with close friends [Hammer 17, Granovetter 16]. On the second question, quite frequently studies are confined to the interview of ego alone, because of the scope of work involved in tracing named network contacts. However, were contacts to be interviewed, it would serve to substantiate ego's reports, making the information on one's network somewhat more complete. Contacts may be widely dispersed geographically, and the associated cost in tracing could be prohibitive. Observation is always a useful complement to interviews as it verifies information and gives the researcher a real life view of what obtains. But again, this has its problems. It may not always be feasible or convenient, particularly on the part of ego, for the researcher to directly observe social interaction.

The proposed model requires that we identify the network contacts in terms of their supportive or non-supportive roles with respect to ego's sources of livelihood. Within this broad area one will also need to know if network ties specialize in any one area, for example, child-care or if the relationship is fairly general. In other words, how will a network tie be operationalized? Several approaches could be used. Ego could be asked first to name all those persons with whom she is close, and then others she knows, but with whom she is not so close. This should provide a listing of ego's close and distant contacts. Posed in this way the question will yield both kin and non-kin network ties. It is always useful to treat these types separately, so the question could be prefaced to elicit this. We still would not know the nature of the functions performed by each tie. A follow up question could try to find out those that are important to ego and in what way. It has been noted that the vagueness of 'importance' posed problems for some respondents [Barrera 2], so that a suggested approach is to specify the functions that would be served by certain relationships and then ask ego to name those persons who serve

the functions described [Ratcliffe 22]. This approach is particularly useful if one wants to study only social support network systems.

Another approach to the identification of network contacts is to ask the subject to name those persons with whom he has been in contact over a specified period of time - for example 3 to 5 days - and the social activities involved. The time dimension depends on the overall designs of the study and the particular interest of the researcher. In some cases a longer time frame might be more methodologically sound, though the problem of recall accuracy has to be considered. Of course, prospective studies are also feasible. This would log and/or observe ego's relationships over the specified period. The combination of time and contacts provides a sample of ego's behaviour and his egocentric network [Sanjek 25]. Some analysts add a spatial dimension by focusing on interaction in specific settings [Epstein 13, Sanjek 25]. There is no 'correct package' that can be suggested. Each researcher must study his field conditions and in line with his research objective pursue a course that is appropriate and practical yet methodologically sound, and then be in a position to defend the option that has been adopted.

[1] ASCHENBRENNER, Joyce, *Lifelines. Black Families in Chicago*, N.Y.: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1975.

[2] BARRERA, Manuel, "A Method for Assessment of Social Support Networks in Community Survey Research", *Connections*, Vol. 3, No. 3, 1980.

[3] BARNES, J.A. "Class and Committees in a Norwegian Island Parish", *Human Relations*, VII, 1954.

[4] _____, "Networks and Political Process", in Mitchell, J.C. (ed.), *Social Networks in Urban Societies*, Manchester University Press, 1971.

[5] _____, *Social Networks*, Addison-Wesley, Modular Publications, Module 26, 1972, 1-29.

[6] BERKMAN, L.F. and SYME, S.L., "Social Networks, Host Resistance, and Mortality", *American Journal of Epidemiology*, 1977, 109.

[7] BIERSTEDT, Robert, "An Analysis of Social Power", in Coser, Lewis and Rosenberg, Bernard, (eds.), *Sociological Theory. A Book of Readings*, New York: Macmillan Co., 1957.

[8] BLUMBERG, Rae Lessor with Maria Pilar Garcia, "The Political Economy of the Mother-Child Family: A Cross-societal view" in Otero-Lenero, Luis, (ed.), *Beyond the Nuclear Family Model*, London: Save, 1976.

[9] _____, *Stratification: Socio-economic and Sexual Inequality*, WCB, 1978.

[10] BOISSEVAIN, Jeremy, "Network Analysis: A Reappraisal", *Current Anthropology*, Vol. 20, No. 2, June 1979, pp.392-394.

[11] BOTT, Elizabeth, *Family and Social Networks*, London: Tavistock Publications, 1957.

[12] CLARKE, Edith, *My Mother Who Fathered Me*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1957.

[13] EPSTEIN, A.L. "The Network and Urban Social Organisation" in Mitchell, J.C., (ed.), *Social Networks in Urban Societies*, Manchester University Press, 1969.

[14] FESTINGER, L., Schachter, S., and Back, K., *Social Pressures in Informal Groups*, New York: Harper, 1950.

[15] GERTH, Hans and MILLS, C. Wright, "Power and Authority: A Summary", in Coser, Lewis and Rosenberg, Bernard (eds.), *Sociological Theory, A Book of Readings*, New York: Macmillan Co., 1957.

[16] GRANOVETTER, M., "The Strength of Weak Times", *American Journal of Sociology*, 78: 1360-1380, 1973.

[17] HAMMER, Muriel, "Social Supports, Social Networks and Schizophrenia", *Schizophrenia Bulletin*, Vol. 7, No. 1, 1981.

[18] _____, "Impact of Social Networks on Health and Disease", unpublished, 1981.

[19] HIRSCH, Barton J. "Natural Support Systems and Coping with Major Life Changes", *American Journal of Community Psychology*, in press.

[20] _____, "Psychological Dimensions of Social Networks: A Multimethod Analysis", *American Journal of Community Psychology*, Vol. 7, No. 3, 1979.

[21] MITCHELL, J.S., *Social Networks in Urban Societies*, Manchester University Press, 1969.

[22] RATCLIFFE, W.D., "Social Networks and Health", *Connections*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1978.

[23] ROBERTS, G.W. and SINCLAIR, S., *Women in Jamaica*, New York: KTO Press, 1978.

[24] RODMAN, Hyman, *Lower Class Families: The Culture of Poverty in Negro Trinidad*, London: Oxford University Press, 1971.

[25] SANJEK, Roger, "A Network Method and its Uses in Urban Ethnography", *Human Organization*, Vol. 37, No. 3, Fall, 1978.

[26] SIDEL, Ruth, *Urban Survival, the World of Working Class Women*, Boston: Beacon Press, 1978.

[27] SMITH, Raymond, *The Negro Family in British Guiana*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1956.

[28] SMITH, M.G., *West Indian Family Structure*, Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1962.

[29] STACK, Carol, *All Our Kin*, New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1974.

[30] TOLSDORF, C.C., "Social Networks, Support and Coping: An Exploratory Study", *Family Process*, 15: 407-418, 1976.

[31] UNITED NATIONS, *Methods of Analysing Census Data on Economic Activities of the Population*, Population Studies, No. 43, New York, 1968.

[32] WALKER, Robert, L. "Social and Spatial Constraints in the Development and Functioning of Social Networks, A Case Study of Guildford", *Connections*, Vol. 1, No. 3, 1978.

[33] WELLMAN, Barry, "The Application of Network Analysis to the Study of Support", Resource Paper No. 3, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto, 1981.

[34] WEBER, Max, "Types of Authority", in Gerth, H.H. and Mills, C.W. (ed.), *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1946.

[35] WINCH, Robert, "Inferring Minimum Structure from Function or Did the Bureaucracy Create the Mother-Child Family", in Marks, A.F. and Romer, Rene (eds.), *Family and Kinship in Middle America and the Caribbean*, Curacao: Institute of Higher Studies; Leiden: Department of Caribbean Studies, Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology, 1978.

[36] WOLFE, Alvin, "The Rise of Network Thinking in Anthropology", *Social Networks*, 1, 1978, 53-64.

Variables

Independent

Size	Small Medium Large	No. of contacts in network
Density	High Low	No. of connected contacts out of possible total
Content	Multiplexity Uniplexity Symmetric Asymmetric	Multiple stranded tie Single stranded tie Balanced relationship Unbalanced relationship

Intervening Variables

Source of Livelihood - In operational terms this could include

Monetary Assistance
Accommodation (free or subsidized).
Material support - goods such as food, clothes, etc.
Child-Care assistance (taking care of child or paying for such care).
Provision of job or access to job, e.g. information which resulted in job placement.
Help with household chores.

Note: Ties are not necessarily supportive. A tie could be supportive at one point in time and be non-supportive in another, or could generally be non-supportive in some or all of the above areas.

Emotional Support could include

Visits during specific crises
Advice re crisis situations
Material or other types of assistance given specifically as a result of crisis
Any other crisis-related interaction.

Women and the Family

This volume contains four papers reflecting different approaches to the topic. Victoria Durant-Gonzalez, using anthropological field studies and survey data, focuses on role ideals and role behaviour of Caribbean women, centering around the family as a realm of female responsibility. Jean Jackson uses case studies to explore some of the emotional transactions between women and their families. Joycelin Massiah examines census and other information on household headship. Dorian Powell outlines an analysis of women's network of relationships. As Hermione McKenzie comments in her Introduction, this collection of papers represents "not so much an end as a beginning. The most important functions of these papers are to bring out the many existing complexities and contradictions in the lives of Caribbean women, and to lead us toward the goal of more detailed analysis and understanding."

The Contributors

Hermione McKenzie, a Grenadian, is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. Her major research interests include social services, the sociology of development, family systems, and the status of women.

Victoria Durant-Gonzalez, an American, is a lecturer in Anthropology at the Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, U.S.A. Her major research interests include the anthropology of women, Caribbean ethnography, and technology and the role of women in development.

Jean Jackson, a Trinidadian, is a research assistant on the WCP and is based at the Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. Her major area of interest is social work.

Joycelin Massiah, a Guyanese, is the Deputy Director, Institute of Social and Economic Research, University of the West Indies, Barbados and Regional Coordinator of the Women in the Caribbean Project. Her major areas of research interest are fertility, family planning and women in development.

Dorian Powell, a Jamaican, is Head of the Department of Sociology, University of the West Indies, Mona, Jamaica. Her major areas of research interest lie in fertility, family planning and teenage pregnancy.

Institute of Social and Economic Research
(Eastern Caribbean)

University of the West Indies
Cave Hill, Barbados

Printed by CARIBBEAN GRAPHICS - BARBADOS.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE